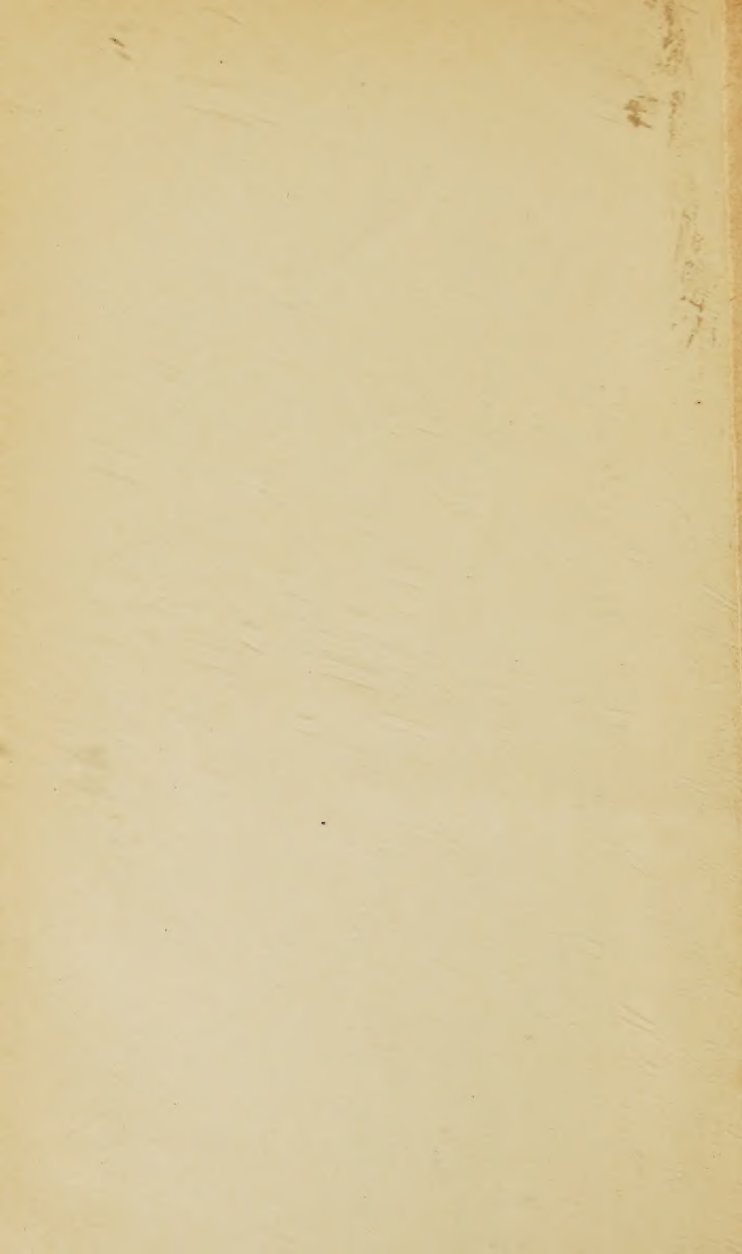


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FORTIFYING THE LAYMAN

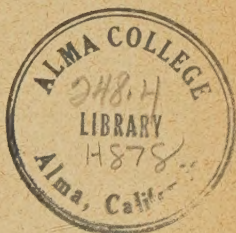


The Loyola



FORTIFYING THE LAYMAN

BY
ERNEST R. HULL, S.J.



SECOND EDITION



The Loyola

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PREFACE

WHEN going over the proofs of this most important and instructive little book with a view to writing the present Preface, I read pencil in hand, with the object of marking a few salient passages, or scoring some of the more striking phrases, for the purpose of quotation. But now that I have read the book through, I find that every page is so heavily scored with pencil lines, sometimes double or treble, that, were I to carry out my intention, I should find myself copying out a great part of Father Hull's text. It seems, therefore, better and more practical to condense what I have to say in the words of the angelic voice that spoke to St. Augustine:—*Tolle, lege.*

I would like to say to every priest having care of a parish or having to deal in any way with young men: Take and read through Father Hull's book. Speaking on the platform of the Catholic Conference at Blackburn in 1905, I practically said the same thing, and gave the same advice to my hearers, when telling them of the forthcoming publication of *Fortifying the Layman*. Of course I have no idea of confining my advice to the clergy. Indeed, one of the objects of my recommending the book to them was that they might disseminate it among the intelligent laity. I am confident it is likely to do much good.

The position of the educated laity in the Church; their co-operation with the clergy in all kinds of work,

religious, social, educational; their influence both within and without the fold; the organization of their forces under the guidance of the Church and her hierarchical leaders: these are questions becoming more and more vital every year as this twentieth century progresses. It will be to a large extent a century of the laity, and that, let us hope, in the very best sense of the phrase. How to secure this, Father Hull, as far as I can judge, has indicated in this little work far better, more clearly and more concretely than has been done elsewhere. I call particular attention to his admirable and original discussion of Mental Atrophy—a pathological study of the deepest interest and most pressing importance. As to his practical remedial suggestions, I hope that all educators of youth will most seriously consider his concluding chapters, which seem to point to a greatly needed reform in the teaching of religion in the upper classes of our schools, foreshadowed some few years ago by the lamented Bishop Bellord; such reform I believe to be the key of the problem. But the work begun at school must be continued in life after school, and Father Hull's timely essay will guide us how best to secure this.

✠ LOUIS CHARLES,
Bishop of Salford.

The above lines were written for the original edition of the book, published in India. In introducing the same book to English readers, it will be useful to add that our C.T.S., under whose auspices it now appears, have published several pamphlets bearing on some of the topics discussed by Father Hull, a list of which will be found at the end of the book.

✠ L. C.

St. Bede's College, Manchester.
10th August, 1906.

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SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

I.—One of the questions of the day is, how to fortify the layman against the influences which tend to undermine his religion. In the first place he needs fortifying that he may be able to give a good account of his faith against personal attacks; secondly, that he may be able to resist the more insidious irreligious influences which confront him in the current press p. 1

II.—Instances showing the necessity of the first kind of help, and the success with which it can be supplied, are given from the personal experience of the writer within recent years. In these instances a vigorous promptitude in dealing with attacks not only served to put calumniators to silence, but enabled the layman to hold up his head, confident in the strength of the Catholic cause p. 12

III.—The first and most obvious measure is to furnish the layman with answers to current attacks, by pamphlets and by articles in the current press. What has already been done requires collecting and cataloguing so as to facilitate immediate replies as each attack occurs. Inquiry-guilds for Catholics are also recommended p. 20

IV.—But this is only a surface aspect of the question. Going deeper, we ask how leakage in the Church among educated laymen is to be explained. Some instances are undoubtedly due to the seductions of sin and to moral degeneration; others to intellectual debauchery

through reading atheistic literature. But the typical case peculiar to modern times is ascribable to neither of these causes, but to something which we can only designate as "mental atrophy" p. 28

V.—Mental atrophy means the wasting away of the mind for want of proper food and exercise; & hardened conscience being taken as an instance in point. We are here concerned with the atrophy of the religious faculty, or the loss of a taste for religion. This is brought on simply by a lack of religious food for the mind, as material for the religious faculty to exercise itself upon p. 37

VI.—The one-sidedness of modern education is largely responsible for this. It develops the acquisitive faculties, but gives little encouragement for the contemplative faculties. The result is an active craving for novelty and a dislike or inability to ponder over old truth. Consequently, while everything else in life is felt to be full of interest, because ever fresh and changing, religious truth is felt to be tedious because old and always the same p. 45

VII.—Mental atrophy, being due to a one-sided development of the mind, can only be remedied by providing the neglected faculty with the material on which it ought to work, and by getting it to exercise itself thereon. In secular departments, the craving for knowledge is fully felt. This knowledge acts in turn as a stimulant to the mind, and thence affects both thought and feeling; whereas emptiness of mind prevents activity either of thought or feeling. It will be found that Catholics negligent of their religion are as a rule dead in heart because they are empty in head p. 56

VIII.—This state of things is fostered by the predominance given to secular subjects in education. A boy who shows himself ignorant of things an educated man ought to know is considered a disgrace to his bringing-

up; whereas ignorance of things which an educated Catholic ought to know is accepted with complacency. However, it must be acknowledged that even in secular matters the school course can only enforce a certain amount of foundation grind-work; and if a boy is to grow up into a cultured man, he must take an interest in culture and work for himself p. 64

IX.—All the more is this true in the comparatively neglected department of religion. A boy or a man must to a great extent secure his own mental equipment and exercise himself with it. And this he will never do until he has felt the interest of the subject. It cannot be denied that religion, taken with its collateral matter, is the most interesting subject in the world; and if mental atrophy is to be cured it can only be done by bringing this interest home to the layman, and making him feel it for himself p. 75

X.—But prevention is better than cure; and mental atrophy must if possible be prevented from coming on by a judicious training of the young while at school. The creation of mental interest is diametrically opposed to cram-methods, and is therefore difficult to secure under our present system of education. Still something can be done to show the young not only that secular subjects are interesting, but that the same is true of religion. When once this is secured, facilities must be given for the young to furnish their minds with religious knowledge; and thus will be started an interest which will lead to intelligent religious reading; so that knowledge may breed admiration, and admiration affection, and affection loyalty, and loyalty service and faithful observance. This, it would seem, is the only effectual way of fortifying the layman p. 85

I. THE LAYMAN AND HIS NEEDS

THE vital question of the present day, in view of maintaining the strength of Catholicism in the world, seems to be : How can we fortify the layman ?

The layman differs from the cleric in three ways. First, he exercises no functions of an official kind in the religious ministry of the Church. Secondly, he receives no special training in theology to enable him to champion the cause of the Church. Thirdly, he is subject to no special discipline or jurisdiction under Church authority. His religion is largely a personal matter, and his good works for the service of others are an outcome of spontaneous choice. The religious knowledge required in him comprises the positive teachings of faith and morals ; and whatever else he possesses depends on his own special opportunities and personal enterprise. His obligations are contained in the moral laws of God and the common disciplinary laws of the Church as to the use of prayer and sacraments, and the like. Contrasting the lay and clerical states, it may be said that the cleric lies under the direct control and supervision of the Church as regards training, equipment, and occupation throughout his life ; while the layman's training, equipment, occupation, and circumstances of life are largely determined by his own initiative and choice.

The whole notion of priestcraft as it is generally understood by certain outsiders is curiously absent

from the Church, especially at the present day. Practically speaking, the clergy have just so much hold on the laity as their personal influence and the wishes of the laity themselves determine, and no more. Beyond the dictates of conscience the modern layman holds a remarkably free position. He practises or neglects his religion at will; and all that the clergy can do is to help him with professional advice when he comes for it, or at most exert whatever influence they can to draw him to the better way. Nothing like moral coercion exists in his case. In the language of Aristotle, the clergy exercise over the laity of the present day a politic and not a despotic control. Yet the layman forms the overwhelming majority in the body of the Church; and the whole working function of the clergy consists in taking means to increase the number of the laity, and in keeping to the Church those who are in it; in trying to lead them from bad to good, or from good to better; lastly, in fortifying them against attack. We say *fortifying*, not *defending*. For the layman—being, as we have said, in a position of life which leaves him practically to shift for himself and to make or unmake his own spiritual life—stands to a great extent alone in the world to defend himself as best he can. To the clergy he can resort at will for help—not as fleeing from the enemy into a refuge, but as seeking armour and weapons wherewith to sally forth and carry on the battle for himself in the open field.

The subject is many-sided, and we must needs restrict ourselves to one point at a time. Beginning with the classes of laymen, we prefer at once to confine ourselves to what may be comprehensively described as the *educated* Catholic or the *intelligent* Catholic—men of the army and navy and civil service, or holding other official or public positions, as well as professional men, business men, &c., without, however, excluding the

intelligent workman—in short, all who find themselves confronted with the questions of the day through their reading of the daily paper, through magazines and general literature, and through the society with which their avocations bring them into contact. Naturally, too, we confine ourselves to the Catholic layman living under what we may call English conditions. The conditions in other countries may be so different that our remarks ought not to be applied elsewhere before ascertaining whether they are applicable.

We take the ordinary educated or intelligent layman living in the world as just described. We consider the intellectual or quasi-intellectual difficulties to which he is exposed—which at the present day are to him a cause of embarrassment, of perplexity, or of doubt. We ask what are his needs under the circumstances, and what can be done to supply those needs in order to fortify him in his faith and religion ?

THE LAY ENVIRONMENT.

There was a time, not so long gone by, when the Catholic had to keep his religious profession in the background if he wished to get on in the world and to avoid the scorn and ridicule of his fellow-countrymen. A professed Catholic had little chance of employment in business, and the discovery of his religion often meant dismissal, or at least a life of misery among his fellow-workmen or clerks. The situation has now changed. Official disabilities have disappeared ; sinister influences of a private kind are gradually following suit. The rabid and brutal stages of the anti-Catholic mania have passed, and have given place to a quieter form of prejudice. The educated Catholic in his office or other employment generally finds himself at home ; the same applies equally to military and naval men, to those in

the civil service, and (though to a less extent) to artisans, mill hands, mechanics, and the labouring classes generally. The situation is no longer acute.

But there are other conditions which have taken the place of the old. The Catholic finds himself mixing on terms of equality with three classes of men. There is first the ordinary Protestant; next, the colourless indifferentist; thirdly, the positive unbeliever. Amongst these various classes, some are quiet and inoffensive, and innocuous to the Catholic. But there are others of an aggressive and offensive character, ever ready to take an opportunity of baiting a Catholic when they meet one, sometimes in a fanatical, sometimes in a supercilious, and sometimes in a half jocose, bullying or bantering way; and there is hardly a mess in the army or navy, hardly a club or office among civilians, hardly a factory or workshop among the labouring classes, in which this type is not to be found. It is the juxtaposition of the educated Catholic with persons of this description which creates the need as to which the present chapter is written.

As a rule this is the way matters work out. The vast literature now pouring forth like a magnified Niagara from the current press always supplies an intermittent succession of ideas and arguments, a large proportion of which can be directed against the Catholic layman. Sometimes it is an attack on the Church and her distinctive doctrines and practices, proceeding generally from Protestant sources. Sometimes it is an attack on the foundations of Christianity—a rejection of miracles, of the Scriptures, of the principle of revelation. At another time it will be the promulgation of some scientific discovery supposed to explode the doctrines of God and religion. Often it will be a study in comparative religion which derives Christianity from Buddhism, or makes out all religions to be mere local developments

of human sentiment or fancy. More often still it will be the benign and comprehensive view that morals are everything and dogmas nothing ; that creeds are empty formulas, and philanthropy and culture the real essence of religion ; that all religions are good, or matters of taste and inclination and not of objective truth ; and so on.

THE PERSONAL ATTACK.

In consequence of this, the Catholic layman, without going out of his way in the least, finds all these things forced upon his notice. They appear in various parts of his morning paper. They invade him in the form of news, of reported lectures, of leading articles. They thrust themselves on him in the form of pamphlets and circulars. They take him by surprise in conversations in the office and the mess-room and the club. He cannot avoid them even if he would. And what is more, the kind of person we have already described, who takes a half-malicious, half-jocular delight in "having the Papist on" whenever he gets a chance, comes into the office or club or mess-room with a paper or an article in his coat-pocket, to get as much amusement out of his Catholic compeer as the occasion will allow. This being the situation, what is to be done ?

There are three possible methods. The first is to box up the Catholic layman, to cut off his papers, to isolate him from social intercourse and turn him into a Trappist. That can hardly be tried, and consequently two other alternatives remain. The Catholic may rebut everything with indignation, deny everything as a lie, and fence himself about with the porcupine quills of offended dignity or righteous wrath, or the hedgehog impregnability of a sullen contempt. But this is just what the enemy wants—to use the Catholic as a butt,

to make him uncomfortable, to "take a rise out of him." And there are other disadvantages. The non-Catholic will think he has scored not merely against the Catholic but also against his religion; the Catholic will naturally find the situation intolerable and become morose, and a morose feeling associated with religion is certainly not calculated to strengthen faith or devotion. That method will not do. Another is to turn the whole matter off as a joke, to indulge in repartee; this is a better way, but how few can follow it, and what a ghastly failure it is if not successful!

Then there is the way of calmly and good-humouredly meeting the charge and seriously denying or refuting it. In certain cases where a matter of principle is involved, this can sometimes be done; a Catholic possessed of the ordinary instruction of the Catechism can often make a firm and clear profession of his belief, adding some ordinary reason for it, and by so doing can command the respect of his company for the courage of his convictions, without being called on to frame anything like an elaborate apologetic. In fact, we believe that in cases like this, unless the layman is really qualified for his task, anything like controversial discussion is not only useless but mischievous. He will either understate or overstate the Catholic position; concede what ought to be denied or deny what ought to be conceded; and in any case find that the adversary gets the better of him in the end. This does not mean that the Catholic position in itself is weak. It only means that, whatever the question at issue, it is extremely easy to attack, and extremely difficult to conduct a successful defence. The aggressor may know nothing but the superficial objection he has picked up, yet the task of refuting it may require a considerable amount of training or special knowledge. In controversy, that party always scores who can quote chapter and verse; and the objector has

chapter and verse ready, while the Catholic taken by surprise can neither refute the chapter and verse of his adversary nor supply chapter and verse of his own. And if (as sometimes happens) the Catholic is rash, he will unknowingly commit himself to positions which are not really sound or defensible, and lay himself open to a refutation on some side issue—which is controversially taken as a loss of the principal case.

But besides these which we may call offensive attacks, there are others of a more friendly nature. Topics touching on religion are constantly turning up in conversation under all conceivable circumstances. Some charge is quoted or some question raised by men who are in the best possible dispositions to learn from any one who can instruct them, and would listen with pleasure and profit. To the well-informed Catholic these occasions are invaluable opportunities for removing prejudices and misunderstandings about the faith or about religion generally; and cases are not uncommon in which the capability of a Catholic to give a reason for the faith that is within him has led to conversions in the end.

TRIALS TO FAITH.

Nor must we lose sight of a consideration which is of greater importance than all that have gone before. The anti-religious topics of the day are obtruded on the attention of the layman in a way they are not forced on the attention of the clerical student—with this disadvantage, that whereas the cleric has it within his professional scope to possess an answer, the layman has not. Even the utmost precautions fail in most cases to remove the difficulty. The layman reads a book or an article before he knows its tendency. There is no class of literature which is free from poison, no class of

company which is certainly safe. An insidious idea is insinuated in an unexpected moment, and those moments occur almost daily. The principles of avoiding dangerous literature may be understood and as far as possible followed; and yet in spite of all precautions the poison is inserted, and once inserted works its way. Ecclesiastical legislation can prohibit particular books, but it cannot exercise an effective or exhaustive censorship upon the entire press. Hence for one book condemned—perhaps after it has been perused by scores of readers—there are thousands of others which must from the nature of the case escape condemnation. Nothing but a bulletin issued every day, in every city, on each day's publications, would meet the case; and such a bulletin would only become known to a percentage of the faithful after they had read in their morning paper just what they ought to have left alone. Then as to asking advice; that, as a rule, is thought of only when the mischief has been done. Besides, no advice would meet the case; and the question recurs with another book or article as soon as the first has been disposed of.

In short, no efforts whatever can keep the layman out of contact with the questions of the day. They mix themselves up with everything he meets with, everything he touches. Every kind of unsettling idea is shot into his mind. His academic studies, his hobbies, his courses of reading, the conversations of his companions, all teem with them.

He may have the strength of a hero, and may throw off their influence time after time. He may be firm and loyal in the faith, and treat them as evil temptations. He may go through trial after trial unscathed. But even then there will always be in his mind the consciousness of questions raised and unanswered and yet needing an answer. The half-revealed existence of a line of thought out of harmony with his own will work on his

imagination ; and though he may deepen the foundations of his religion in the will, he must still feel the want of a further foundation in the intelligence. The calm sense of security in his faith which he formerly enjoyed will thus be threatened. He may reassure himself that there must be an answer ; but what that answer is he does not know, though he would gladly do so. The situation becomes strained for want of an intellectual basis. The sturdy soul may smother down his difficulty and survive ; he may have no disposition to abandon his faith ; he may recognize that there is no reasonable ground for doing so. But the strain is there. If, however, instead of this heroic character, his dispositions are not so favourable—if his will is weak and his faith shaky—there is but little chance. His mind will brood more and more over the new idea which threatens destruction of the old. He will tend to read more in the new direction, seeking light against his faith and not in its favour. From curiosity to doubt ; from doubt to further doubt ; then the ties of the faith are weakened and at last broken ; and thus he drifts away into unbelief, with a growing disposition to regard religion as a memory of the past—as the old order which changeth, giving place to new.

THE DANGER OF THE AGE.

Thus analyzed, the dangerousness of the present age can be closely defined. In other times the danger was different. It came from the inherent tendency of men to neglect the practice of morality ; the burden of the commandments was felt to be too heavy. Men lost faith if at all by neglect of practice ; their lives became vicious and their spiritual sense dead ; or they became worldly-ambitious and God was crowded out ; unable to serve God and Mammon they chose Mammon. But

this was not so much a loss of faith; it was rather an abandonment of a God they believed in and a religion they acknowledged; it was the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh and the pride of life; it was a preference for licence, and for darkness because of the licence which darkness afforded. Now it is far otherwise. We do not mean to imply for a moment that these causes are no longer at work. Much of the falling away from religion may still be due to them. But this is the danger of all time—not the new danger peculiar to the present time. It is after all a platitude to say that the special danger to be met in our own days is one which springs from thought and not from passion—is one which works its way through the intellect and not through the will. It lies in the rivalry of new ideas fighting against old ones; in the desire of the intellect to know—a good desire in itself, but subject to enormous perversion and abuse; in the quest for evidence—again a good quest, but enormously difficult. It lies in the circulation of new ideas claiming to be true and at the same time destructive of the old; in the view that nothing is in possession; that there is no prescriptive right; that it is not enough to hold fast what we possess till it has been conclusively displaced; that we can and ought to begin all over again, and hold nothing until it has been proved beyond cavil. The old phrase of St. Anselm, *fides quaerens intellectum*, used to mean that faith stood first and that intelligence only sought a deeper understanding of the truth which faith provided. Now it would rather mean that faith needs justification, and must secure it if faith is to remain.

Hence the attitude into which intelligent Catholics, placed in the environment we have described, are liable to drift, is that of regarding their faith as a prisoner standing before the bar of reason and evidence, and confronted with a vast multitude of accusing witnesses

who have a great deal to say for themselves. And we are afraid that in many cases the accusers are prominent in the court, while the accused hardly succeeds in making himself heard. The ordinary Catholic literature which comes in the way of most young men does not devote itself to proving the claims of the faith. Thus while every error is raising its daily voice, dinning itself into the ears of the layman, the answering voice of the Church is unheard, and has laboriously to be sought by inquiries for which the layman has little time, and which it would require quite exceptional opportunities to reach. The clergy are engaged in administering their parishes, and in keeping alive the devotion of those who come to them for that purpose. But to be in the forefront trumpeting the tones of truth as loud, as long, and as often as the trumpets of error sound forth—to herald the public reply as soon as the first sound of the challenge is heard—would require an army of writers and a legion of papers, and an organization as vast as the world's press itself. To be effectual, every time the voice of anti-Catholic doctrine is raised, the voice of Catholic doctrine ought to be raised with equal strength and equal publicity; and as it is always easier to make an attack than to refute it, the powers and equipment of the Catholic side would require far more to surpass that of the enemy.

II. SOME INSTANCES IN POINT

THIS picture of the experiences of a layman's life may to some readers seem novel and exaggerated. We know that there are laymen who have not to suffer in this way. All we can say is that their lines have fallen in pleasant places—*funes mihi ceciderunt in praeclaris*. That other laymen do suffer exceedingly, we can vouch from intimate knowledge. It is certainly no exaggeration to say that heroism is being daily practised by Catholic laymen under the conditions above described—heroism not the less admirable because it takes the form of commonplace—on account of the fact that as Catholics they have to bear the raillery, the mild contempt of non-Catholics, the embarrassment of living with men who know nothing of the Catholic religion except the accusations constantly furnished by the daily press and current literature. Other Catholics of less stamina are daily succumbing to the influence of their surroundings, and becoming infected with a distaste for their religion, simply because they are unable to meet the aggressor on his own ground, not being furnished with the answer which would give them the courage of their personal convictions. The feeling is being forced on them that religion generally is a losing cause among the educated class; and the sense of discouragement growing on them tends to kill out first enthusiasm, then firmness of conviction, then practice, and at last perhaps all belief. Victims of a nightmare induced by

the indigestible pabulum of anti-Catholic attack and anti-religious opinion, they begin to imagine that by letting their religion slide they are joining the movement of enlightenment and progress and abandoning the exploded and timeworn delusions of the darker past. We claim to be enemies of pessimism; if the picture is dark, it comes not from a sense that there is no hope, but from a conviction that we must briskly waken up to the realities of the situation and set about supplying the remedy before it is too late.

It will greatly contribute to the result we wish to secure—to make clear both the need there is of being energetic in the matter, and the possibility of doing something to the purpose—if we can bring the situation vividly before all readers by a number of concrete instances falling within our own experience, which illustrate at once the need as actually felt and as actually met.

MANCHESTER.

We begin with Manchester. In 1894 the Protestant Bishop of that city delivered a well-elaborated attack on the Catholic position, entitled “The Roman Claims to Supremacy.” On past occasions, attacks of this kind had either been passed over in silence, or met in a way which failed to bring the answer prominently before the public—even the Catholic public. Attacks of this kind were repeatedly going on with impunity in the local press, and were read by Catholics and Protestants alike; but few if any ever saw a refutation of them. The result was that every Catholic clerk or mill-hand was confronted with these charges at his desk or machine, and taunted with his inability to find an answer. The situation was often extremely embarrassing, and few people were aware of the silent heroism practised by the

loyal Catholic under the circumstances. Dr. Moorhouse's attack came at a time when Catholics were beginning to feel their own strength. The hour had come and the man. The first address was answered by the late Bishop Bilsborrow of Salford, in his own Cathedral; but though copies of the lectures, like those on the other side, were offered for sale in the streets, this was not enough. It was the work of Fr. Bernard Vaughan to engage the largest public hall in Manchester, and cover the city walls with large posters announcing free lectures in answer to the Bishop of Manchester. The Free Trade Hall was filled every Thursday to the number of six thousand, of whom a small proportion were Catholics, the vast majority being Protestants or unbelievers, who listened with keen interest and respectful attention for two hours every week till the course was finished. The writer was present at two of the lectures, and it was a sight never to be forgotten. A few rows of front seats were reserved for persons of quality; the rest of the hall, floor, and gallery was thronged with people of all classes, chiefly working men fresh from their day's labour—their grimy faces full of interest, listening to the details of the testimony of Cyprian and Augustine and the Councils, never tired or restless, and at times breaking out into loud applause. What we want to notice however was the fact that after the lecture Father Vaughan was almost carried to his cab by throngs of enthusiastic Catholic mill-hands and mechanics; and from that day they hailed him as their champion and defender against the petty persecution they had hitherto been enduring from their mates in the office and the workshop and the mill. None could now taunt them with the accusation and demand an answer. The name of Father Vaughan was like a coat of mail and a sword of steel. That was what we call *fortifying the layman*; he could at length

hold up his head like a man. This was the effect at the time; and it showed what was needed and what could be done.

GLASGOW.

We turn next to an important Catholic centre for Catholics in the north. There existed in Glasgow a similar situation; not a week went by without some pernicious accusation against the Church appearing in the current press. Yet as a rule the charge was passed over without notice. Thousands of people were reading accusations calculated to foster and promote the worst possible impression about matters Catholic, but never reading or hearing of an answer, and inferring (as was natural) that no answer was possible because no answer was forthcoming. The arguments used to defend this policy of silence are worth recounting. First, the writers of these calumnies are not worth answering. Secondly, an answer only makes them worse and instead of one accusation we get five. Thirdly, the public which reads the accusation will not read the answer. Fourthly, the charge has been refuted over and over again without doing any good. Fifthly, the clergy have their hands full with their parish work and their schools, and have no time. Sixthly, controversy always runs into side issues and generally degenerates into a personal quarrel. Seventhly, controversy only breeds bad blood and keeps hostility alive.

Meantime what about fortifying the layman? In March, 1903, at the time of the Accession Oath dispute, a letter appeared in the *Glasgow Herald*, which a canny Presbyterian was heard to describe as the sharpest blow the Catholic Church in Scotland had received for years. It was the talk of the city. Days passed without an answer, and the Protestant was triumphant. At last a

prominent lay Catholic in the district of Garnethill, where we were then stationed, tired of seeing the paper thrust under his nose by his Protestant partner and his fellow business-men, came to the presbytery, and declared his intention of writing to the papers and asking whether there was a Catholic in Glasgow capable of giving an answer or not, as the laymen could stand it no longer. This hit the mark: we undertook the question at once. A controversy, spread over some weeks, followed. The enemy made a bold and able defence; but his case was weak, and he could not deny the points scored against him. We refused to diverge into side issues, and drove the nail in each time. The editor was perfectly fair, and the closure came only when the main issue had been thrashed out. The layman was fortified. The coat-pocket no longer contained the attack alone; it held the answer also. The assailant was not silenced altogether; but we did not want him to be. What we wanted was that the public should see that he had made fifteen blunders in his charge, and was not master of his subject; and this they did.

Whereupon we formulated for our own guidance a code for the carrying on of controversy. We realized that every accusation had a few thousand readers who must be confronted with an answer. Our business was not to convert the assailant, or to wring a confession of defeat from him, or reduce him to silence; hence no temptation to lose one's temper or degenerate into personalities or resort to rhetoric. We regarded every attack as a peg on which to hang a vindication of Catholic affairs; to hang a proof that such attacks were based on second-hand and unverified quotations; that generally they were false throughout, and where there was truth in them the truth could be vindicated and explained in a reasonable light. We wished to show to all concerned that an answer existed and only

wanted bringing out; to supply the Catholic layman with the answer and leave him to propagate it when the occasion offered. We wished to show the public that those who recklessly poured forth slanders against Catholics were men possessing no grasp of their subject, and could not face up and prove their assertions; that their chapter and verse was a garble or a misquotation or a hoax. Nor was there any difficulty in doing this. The only rule was to verify the reference; the rest followed. As Holy Week approached, the Catholic veneration of the Cross came to the fore. This time the Catholic Working-men's Club rose. They were being called idolaters over their lathes and looms. They answered by denials and strong language; but that did them no good. Next week they went to work with the answer in their pocket. The layman was fortified; he could give the answer on the spot. The annoyance subsided and the Catholic could hold up his head.

And so the round went on—the threadbare questions of persecution and torture, the Inquisition, the *Monita Secreta*, the Perpetual Virginity, the end justifying the means, Hall Caine's *Eternal City*, murder as the outcome of Catholicism, excommunication and interdict, the morality of the confessional, blind obedience, priestcraft in Ireland, the Tristram Shandy hoax—these are specimens of the charges which came round in their regular turn. And on each and every occasion the world came to know, as far as it was in the power of one man to show it, that the Church had its answer ready, and could give a good account both of itself and of its adversaries.

In all these cases the Catholic layman was fortified by a very simple expedient. That expedient was as follows: As soon as the enemy raises his head, down goes the hammer. He raises his head again. All the better; down goes the hammer. There is no such thing as

losing patience. Each new attack is a new opportunity of opening the public mind to the truth; a new opportunity of saying the same thing over again to a new set of readers; a new chance of vindicating the Church before the world; a new means of instructing the layman and fortifying him against attack. What could one wish for more?

Here is the Church with a message to deliver to the whole of mankind. Here is a press constantly making itself heard against the Church. Here is an age when men are interested to know what the Church has to say for herself. Here is the acceptable time for delivering the message. We may not reach directly those whom we wish to reach; but if we fortify the layman he will find an entrance where the clergy have no way in. He can put in the word where the occasion offers, in his mess-room, in his office, in his club. He can carry the lay apostolate into quarters where the clerical apostolate has no hearing. But only if we fortify him in his own faith; only if we inform his mind on the topic of the day; only if we provide him with the information he wants; only if we awaken him in a keen interest in the defence of his own religion, and furnish him with the means of carrying on the warfare without too much exertion on his own part. Thus in fortifying the laymen we shall be fortifying the Church and promoting its work in the world.

INDIA.

Let us conclude with another instance; this time from India. The layman has to experience in India what he has to suffer in England and Scotland. The institution of the new Papal Commissions became the occasion in some quarters for a taunt to the effect that at last the Pope has succumbed to the spirit of the age; that he

had come to doubt his own infallibility, and begun to recognize the necessity of resorting to evidence in order to discover the truth; that the overwhelming power of modern thought had at last made itself felt even in Rome, of all places in the world; that, in short, Catholics had learnt to see the errors of their old contentions through the light of science and criticism, and were about to join the ranks of progress and enlightenment by abandoning the credulous delusions and superstitions of the past. Soon an educated Catholic called and said that whenever he went to his office, club or private company, he was pestered with questions like the above, for which he wanted an answer. He was in a state of evident perplexity what to think of the matter himself. We recognized the typical case of the layman needing to be fortified. That very week we published in the *Bombay Catholic Examiner* an explanation of the first part of the question, viz., the real meaning of Papal Infallibility. In the two subsequent issues we did what we could for the second, viz., the consideration of the meaning of historical non-revealed traditions as illustrated in the lessons of the Breviary. We were afterwards told that the difficulty had thereby been removed and the meaning of the general question made clear. Letters frequently received from correspondents indicated over and over again the situation of the layman and his need of being fortified. Quite lately a civilian remarked to us, "You Fathers generally have no idea of what the layman goes through in this matter." These examples will suffice to establish the case we are contending for, and satisfy those who have not met this sort of thing, of the need for serious exertions to fortify the layman.

III. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

THERE are a certain number of platitudes common to the subject, to the effect that the layman himself ought to take an interest in Catholic affairs, to read Catholic literature, and thus to fortify himself; that he ought to come to the clergy and ask advice and help; that there is plenty of literature on the subject; that the current Catholic press is constantly dealing with such topics, and so on; finally that the layman need not bother himself about these matters and can safely leave them to experts. This is all very well; but it is not fortifying the layman. It is leaving him to shift for himself in a way which means equivalently giving him up into the hands of the enemy, defenceless and unarmed.

In order to dispose of these *laissez-faire* maxims let us come to a concrete and particular test. We have been making a special study of attacks of the nature described for at least ten years in one way or other; and yet if asked on the spur of the moment to supply a refutation of a paragraph in this morning's paper, ten to one we should have to say—"The objection is familiar, and I read a deal about it some years ago; but at this moment I cannot lay my hands on any thing just meeting the case. I can give you the outlines of the answer, but cannot supply you with details or references. I must look the matter up; and if you will call again in a week I may have something ready." That means going to a bookshop or ransacking libraries, or finding leisure to

look through a number of books, or running at random through back numbers of the *Month*, &c., &c. And when the layman comes back after a week, we should probably have to tell him that we had to write elsewhere to get what we wanted. All this involves delay, and by that time the affair has blown over and the interest passed away. And if this is so with one who has been devoting himself to this sort of thing for years and is set aside for the work, with nothing else to do but to go on with his investigations—what will happen with a priest who has long since left his studies behind; who never gave his attention to controversy, and who has no library to fall back on and no time to look the matter up?

We suppose it must be acknowledged that when it comes to the practical test we are on the whole unequipped on most points—except for a few specialists who are too busy in other occupations to attend to the incidental case. Of course it is true that the charges are limited in number and that they constantly recur with the regularity of comets; hence a limited equipment would meet the substantial requirements of the case. It is also true that there hardly exists an accusation which has not been answered over and over again, and that (except for entirely new incidents) the work has been done already. Again it is true that the layman must shift for himself to the extent that he must get the books, and read for himself, and gradually acquire a little library in some form or other, and possess himself of its contents.

But against these three truisms there are three counter-truths, viz.:—If the layman is to do this, we must give him every facility, by bringing suitable literature in his way in an attractive and easily accessible and easily readable form. Secondly, it is of no use to have had the affair answered sometime and somewhere; it must be unearthed and brought to the notice and reach

of the public here and now. Thirdly, the charges may be limited, but they constantly present themselves in new forms; and success is scored by the answer which is fresh for the current charge, and contains nothing of obsolete application. There is something debilitating in a refutation of Turton when the real person to be refuted is Farrar. However, the important point is that the substantial charge should be met in some way or other; so we can pass the last point over.

A CONTROVERSIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Now to be very practical and to state the minimum that can be done. What we want in the first place is a controversialist's bibliography to be furnished to every priest and every library—handy for the layman to get at, and sold at a moderate price for him to buy if he likes:—

First a catalogue of the standard objections, accusations, &c., against the Church is to be drawn up, under the main divisions of doctrines, practices of devotion, state of the Middle Ages, state of Catholic affairs in modern times, historical points, incidental scandals, &c., &c., or any other convenient headings. In each section detailed cases will be arranged with a copious cross-index. Under each subject a list of books, journalistic articles and tracts will be catalogued, indicating the special point dealt with and the special excellence of each article or book named. By this means we should know at once what resources exist ready for use, and know where to find them.

This work need not be undertaken at first on an exhaustive scale. It could be achieved piecemeal. The Catholic Truth Society could issue a penny handbook of controversial tracts,* comprising a complete bibliography

* The penny C.T.S. book entitled *Catholic Answers to Protestant Charges* to some extent carries out this suggestion.

of its own publications up to date in the way described ; instead of leaving us to work through some seventy volumes of collected tracts in the hope of finding what we want. The Scottish Catholic Truth Society could do the same. Then there is the *Month*. It seems remarkable that the *Month* has been going on printing first-class articles, on almost every point on which we want to fortify the layman, for the space of forty years ; and yet if we want to find a refutation of some time-worn error, we may know it lies buried in the *Month* somewhere half a yard from the end of our nose, but can only find it by working through every volume singly.

Now if these bibliographies were made even provisionally, half the work of fortifying the layman would have been accomplished. The other half would be gradually to accumulate in our clerical and public or club libraries a selection as complete and representative as possible of the books, journals and tracts themselves. By the first measure the clergy would know what to get and where to get it. By the second the clergy and to some extent the laity also would possess the armoury which the layman wants. This would open up facilities for a future measure, viz., not merely to collect a past literature, but to create a current literature for the purpose of fortifying the layman.

AN INQUIRY OFFICE.

This means not the substitution of a Catholic newspaper service for a non-Catholic newspaper service. Our idea rather is as follows : A small body of men, who without being organized into a society, still less forming or dominated by a committee, devote themselves in a co-operative manner to watching current literature and collecting cuttings and books and pamphlets which contain attacks against the Church ; who also collect

Catholic literature dealing with these same attacks ; and who thus collect and construct the bibliography above referred to. These men would open an office for inquiries to which all people in general would resort in need. Some would send cuttings and pamphlets circulating in their own locality, asking for answers. Others would state difficulties of their own or of their non-Catholic friends for the same purpose. Meantime those in the office would be engaged in setting attacks and defences, questions and answers, over against each other out of existing Catholic literature ; or laying in stocks of leaflets and reprints ready for the suitable occasion ; or re-writing answers compiled out of previous ones, bringing them up to date ; or sending out letters of inquiry themselves in case of a current affair and so preparing new answers to new charges.

Thus furnished, their way of meeting the need of the time would be, partly to send names of books to inquirers, partly to send them leaflets or tracts as required, partly to furnish existing Catholic papers with articles dealing with local accusations, to be printed in current issues ; partly to write, print, and circulate broadcast, refutations of lectures, &c., on the spot and at the time of their delivery, partly to dispose of the rest of their available means, time and energy by writing articles for non-Catholic journals and letters to editors so far as they can gain admission to the daily and periodical press ; finally to collect into book-form the results of a year's work and issue an annual volume of Catholic vindications for future use. We might add a weekly paper dealing with inquiries on the instant and admitting articles and letters in points connected with the Catholic faith or the contrary.

The scheme would admit of various developments ; but this outline will suffice for the present to instil a recognition of the need of doing something in this line at once. The Letter Guild for Inquiring Protestants to some extent

supplies the need, but it is not enough to offer information to the outsider. What we want is that the Catholic layman also should come to regard it as a means of assistance against the attacks which come upon him from without. It must, in short, be a "Letter Guild for Inquiring Catholics" as well, and must be known as such.

FRUITS OF THE SCHEME.

Having exposed this scheme for fortifying the layman we may add a few considerations calculated to encourage a vigorous prosecution of the proposed movement, viz., the advantages which will follow from our efforts. Of these the first and most obvious is the comfort conferred on the layman himself, who will not only be able to defend himself with dignity, but will be personally strengthened in his faith, and practice as he learns more truth about his religious communion, and is freed from the moroseness likely to grow upon him under attack. He will thus become proud of his faith instead of being half ashamed of a religion which is made to cut so sorry a figure in the hands of its enemies.

Then again, not only will Catholics generally be furnished with the means of championing their own cause, but well-disposed outsiders will be put in possession of information calculated to antidote prejudices originally inborn in them, and constantly fostered by the current press. On this point we need not dwell at length, as it will be obvious to all.

We may here throw in another consideration—viz., the influence exerted by this policy on the anti-Catholic press. We shall never succeed in abolishing altogether this sort of attack. The rabid controversialist is too irrepressible for that. But one thing we can do. We can—Utopian as the idea may seem—gradually educate

editors of the better-class papers and drive the pest down to the lower strata of the journalistic world. We heard of one New York paper whose editor was dismissed with a week's notice for printing a series of pestilential articles against Catholics; simply because the Catholic subscribers to the number of several hundreds wrote in concert to stop their subscriptions. This was told us by a young Catholic who started the protest and carried it through to the end. There is no need for extreme measures like this. The *irritabile genus editorum* strongly objects to a public exposure of his mistakes. Now it is a remarkable thing how profoundly ignorant the non-Catholic editor is of matters Catholic. *Quem Deus perdere vult, prius dementat*. As a matter of fact almost every time a non-Catholic editor lays hands on a Catholic question his feet are sure to follow.

Even in the simplest and least controversial matters of ordinary life this is also curiously the case. Even if their statements are drawn from Catholic sources they always drop upon the wrong end of the story. A leading paper cannot speak of the Pope's Jubilee without making two blunders of fact in as many sentences. Another cannot mention a list of the Pope's ancestors without three blunders about time, place, and manner of some historic event. A review of an anti-Catholic book cannot appear without a startling blunder as to the character of its author. A convent scandal cannot be reproduced without the reproducer confusing the affairs beyond disentanglement. The most racy and sensational incidents sometimes prove to be nothing but a clever hoax. In fact the hunting down of this kind of game seems to assume the excitement of an exhilarating sport, in which the editor of some non-Catholic paper or his contributor is the victim of the chase.

No self-respecting editor can stand this sort of thing for long. Repeated convictions—though publicly no

notice is taken of them—are found to have remarkable effects. Instead of credulously making anti-Catholic views his own, the chastened editor begins to practise the obvious circumspection of quoting his authorities and protecting himself from his information by inverted commas. This is already something; but if the inverted commas prove no protection, and the quotations themselves are discredited in turn, it gradually dawns on the editor that this sort of news ought not to find place in a respectable and reliable organ; and instead of being in a hurry to print, he waits for confirmation or exposure, or at least keeps himself far from the danger of being the known victim of a hoax or fable.

That this gradual silencing of the guns can really be achieved, at least for the time and place, is a matter of which we have also had experience. In our Glasgow campaign there was a clear example. When we first began our tactics, some cuttings requiring an answer came regularly every week. But it was noticed that after one or two replies the number went down; and after six months there was almost a dearth of instances. To tell the truth we were rather sorry than glad of this; for as every attack was an opening for reaching the public ear, their diminution was a reduction of these openings. However, there is no fear of succeeding so perfectly as to abolish the attack altogether. It is enough if reduced within reasonable bounds so as to be within the possibilities of dealing with each case as it arises, without any being crowded out for want of time and space. The real thing to be attained is not the removal of all attack, but the fortifying of the layman against each attack as it occurs.

IV. THE LEAKAGE QUESTION

THE leakage from the Catholic Church in England is a subject which has occupied a considerable amount of attention in recent years, and in fact so gloomy were the views expressed in some quarters that it might have been imagined that no progress was taking place. Unfortunately the absence of reliable statistics in the past prevented a crushing refutation of this pessimism; though all which were forthcoming stood in favour of a more hopeful view. There can be no doubt that taking a review of the nineteenth century the progress of the Church in England and also in Scotland has been remarkable, even in the way of conversions. But the greatest cause of increase in numbers has been due to wholesale immigrations from Ireland into the large manufacturing towns. It was among this immigrant class that the leakage was chiefly found to take place. Men and women, who had flourished in the Catholic surroundings of their native village in Ireland, were found to drift away with the tide of irreligion and indifference which characterizes our working population; and the main work of the clergy of England lay in the endeavour to rescue from the influence of these surroundings people who had not shown sufficient strength of character to stand what to them was an unprecedented test of religious stability. The problem has been attacked in various quarters with fair success, by organizing boys' brigades, working-men's clubs, and other

means of retaining influence over the people. The improved organization of primary schools placed the children in good hands at an early age; the important work being to carry this influence on between the time of leaving school and the years of adult life. As is usual among Catholics, the mischief did not come in the first instance from loss of the faith, but from loss of practice on the part of parents and consequent neglect of the children, who thus grew up without instruction, and by the second generation were altogether lost to the Church. Thanks to the measures adopted, it may be said that, be the leakage in point of numbers large or small, Catholicism in England is growing steadily both in numbers and in regularity of observance.

Among the educated classes the condition of things is different in many ways. But even here, while the gains by individual conversion are considerable, there is a certain percentage of losses which constitutes a matter of serious importance. As those belonging to this class have had an ordinary Catholic education in our Catholic schools and colleges, the question is sometimes presented in the following form: "How is it that so many of our boys turn out badly after they leave school?" There are optimists and pessimists on this as on other questions; some exaggerating and some under-rating the evil. Some blame the school system as being too confined, and as not giving sufficient exercise for the development of character and self-reliance in early years—besides leaving the boys too ignorant of life, and thus making the passage from school to the world too sudden and unprepared; others blame the influence of the press and of non-Catholic surroundings as too powerful to be resisted. Some again urge the need of more advanced religious and moral instruction in view of future contingencies; while others assert that nothing more can be done at school than is actually done, and they

simply put subsequent failures down to depraved human nature. There is plenty of variety in the explanation of the facts; but though there is little agreement as to the extent of the evil, all agree that it exists, and that it furnishes a problem requiring to be dealt with—not only in England, but wherever English conditions prevail. That the same problem exists in India we have found out, not only by our own short experience, but more especially by consulting those of the clergy who are best conversant with the state of things among the educated classes of Catholics found in that country.

THE NATURE OF THE EVIL.

The nature of the evil can easily be defined. As a rule, direct and positive apostasies are rare among Catholics. Except in case of those whose education from a Catholic point of view has been woefully neglected, it is rare to come across a Catholic deliberately professing himself to be an atheist, or materialist, or even an agnostic. The falling away seems generally to be in point of practice. They no longer attend Mass or fulfil their Easter duties. When visited by the clergy, they will simply say that they are or ought to be Catholics, but that they have given up coming to church. There are various ways suggested of explaining this neglect. Sometimes it is a case where morals have gone wrong, and there is an unwillingness to give up some sinful pursuit. Sometimes it is the case of a mixed marriage, with indifferentism intervening in consequence. Now and then it is a case of the mind being debauched by reading infidel books or frequenting godless company. Sometimes it is a case of immersion in business, and neglect of all thought of a future life. Sometimes it is a case of sheer laziness or the contagious influence of indifferentism in the world

around. As a rule there is little or no animosity against religion. Sometimes a sense of embarrassment appears when religion is broached; but more commonly, relations with the clergy can remain quite cordial provided the question of religion is not too firmly pressed.

Of the type-cases here described several can be dismissed from further consideration on account of their simplicity. Instances where neglect comes from a decline in morality are not new in history, and their cause is inseparably rooted in human nature. In such cases, influence can be brought to bear in order to draw individuals to a better course. The way can be smoothed to a reformation, and the result ultimately depends on the disposition of the will; if this is evil, nothing more can be done except to pray. Again, cases due to anti-Catholic reading can be met by a little friendly discussion or instruction—though (as we have said) these instances among Catholics are not very common. But the real problem begins when we come to the case which to our mind is the peculiar product of the present age. It is the most difficult case of all, and one which, if studied carefully, will give us the key to the whole situation of to-day. To this type-case we must devote a considerable amount of attention.

THE TYPICAL MODERN CASE.

The type in question is marked off from the rest by one thing—that the neglect and apathy in regard to religion does not follow and generally is not followed by any noticeable moral degeneration. We say *marked* degeneration. There is no ascertained liaison, no indulgence in drink; nothing in fact appears except that the place at Mass and Benediction is empty, Communion and Confession cease; the man simply disappears from the church, and religion unobtrusively

disappears from his life. There are not wanting people who on *a priori* grounds cannot believe that any one will give up his faith and practice unless some moral disorder is at the back of it; but in the cases we are considering the only ascertainable moral disorder lies in the neglect of religion and in nothing else.

Another feature of the type in question is the perfect tranquillity with which they can talk of their own state. They have not become atheistic bigots, or enemies of the religion they have abandoned. We know cases where both father and mother are most assiduous in sending their children to a Catholic school and seeing that they attend Mass. They have no wish or word against religion; they look on it as good for those who like it, and even for those who do not. They welcome the visit of the priest, and are on the most unreserved and courteous terms with him. Even when he touches the point of religion they are not disturbed. They simply state facts—that they have not been to church so many years, &c. They do not always resent the urgings of the priest though they remain simply and placidly unmoved by what he says. They do not care to explain or justify themselves or give reasons for their neglect; in fact they have none to give. Such cases are only marked instances of a type, and that a type distinctive of our own time—the type with which we are now concerned.

Then thirdly, we are too apt to ascribe the falling away of such decadent Catholics among the educated classes to intellectual causes outside themselves. Admitting that the explanation does not lie in a decline of morals, another cause is sought in the mental department. The air is full, they say, of anti-Christian ideas; the press and current literature are flooded with them; indifferentism, or the idea that one religion is as good as another; the deeper indifferentism that religion

is a matter of taste and an optional affair ; the idea that creed and ritual are nothing and conduct of life everything ; the idea that religion was an invention of mankind in the time of his mental infancy and that we of the modern age have grown out of it ; the idea that science and culture have disposed of creeds as dead formulas, and of religion as a baseless dream—these and a thousand other ideas are sapping all belief in those who come across them. This man has thus simply read or talked himself into a delusion ; and so in consistency with his change of mind has come the abandonment of the religion in which he was born and brought up. He has simply been perverted in intellect, and follows the logical consequence of the perversion in practice.

This facile explanation, we believe, applies to some cases ; but not to the typical case we are considering. The diagnosis is incomplete and inadequate, and in most cases the process does not take place in the way described. Such a process would result in positive atheists and materialists and anti-religionists ; whereas the type we are studying shows nothing of the sort. If you ask people of this stamp what brought them to neglect their religion you will be struck with the negative character of the reply. It is not because they disliked confession particularly, nor because they wanted to lead a free life, nor because they had read infidel books and been overcome with the objections there raised against their old belief. They have not become converts to science, or theosophy, or comparative religion, or materialism, or agnosticism. Somehow or another, religion has simply vanished by degrees since they left home and school. They still “suppose that Catholic doctrine is all right” ; and “of course they would not think of any other religion except the Catholic one,” and probably “they would send for a priest on their death-bed” ; and so on. And they will say all this without the least agitation or sign of a bad

conscience, but with the same apathy with which they would tell you that they take no interest in politics or in bi-metallism.

Thus defined the type is clear, easily recognizable, and common—it is in fact the type of the age, and the type which is growing and will grow, do what we will to stop it. But so long as we persevere in the idea that all falling away from religion comes from a decline in morals within, or else from the influence of the press and modern literature outside, so long shall we be missing the point, and be wrong both in our diagnosis and in our remedy.

THE CAUSE OF THIS TYPE.

The true diagnosis we contend is that this type of the age is due neither to moral decadence nor to anti-religious literature—even though elements of both may have entered into the case. It is due, we say, neither to moral decline of conduct arising from the passions, nor to intellectual error introduced from outside causes. It is due solely and simply to mental atrophy.

This may seem a strange idea in an age when the chief danger to religion is supposed to arise from the elevation of knowledge over faith, or the elevation of the intellect over the will, or the elevation of the head over the heart. Surely it is due not to mental atrophy, but to the over-activity of the intellect—to the pride of intellectual self-reliance, to the study of religious questions by means of critical investigation and philosophical reasoning—that the falling away of promising young Catholics takes place?

No, we reply; the case is not so. Outside the Church it is perhaps not uncommon for young men who were good Protestants by birth to give up their belief through reading the anti-Christian literature which comes in their way, through the conversations of their unbelieving

associates at school or college, or through the influence of their rationalistic or agnostic professors at the university. With them the process is not a negative but a positive one. They read the "scientific view" as it is called; they accept that view with some slight amount of examination. They think the point is proved, or that the new is an improvement on the old. They cease to be Christians, under the impression that Christianity has had its day, and has fallen out of credit.

This we say is a common occurrence outside the Church; and it is to be explained partly by the general unfitness of Protestant forms of theology for taking and keeping hold on the young mind; partly by the want of a catechetical grounding; partly by the fact that in many Protestant minds *sentiment* holds the prominent place, and principles and definite dogmas either no place or at least a very secondary one. In other words, the unformed character of the young receives from the Protestant system little or no support against attack; and faith, having thus grown with shallow roots, in time of trial falls quickly away. Lastly, there is an entire lack of principles regarding the reading of anti-Christian books among Protestant young men as we know them; and this deprives them of one of the most practical safeguards against anti-Christian influences. The sense of individualism too, which is one of the boasts of Protestants, is in itself another cause of weakness. Religion among Protestants has nothing of that collectivism about it which is felt among Catholics. The young man does not feel himself a member of a compact body to whom loyalty is due. He is an isolated individual; and his religion is solely his own affair, with which no one is concerned but himself. Accountable to no one on earth, it is the most natural thing in the world for him to go his own way.

With Catholics generally the case is altogether

different. The ordinary Catholic training of youth is a very definite thing—definite in doctrines and in principles. It thus forms the character, and provides a stock-in-trade for use on emergency. It does not consist chiefly in sentiment, but in the statement of clear truths to believe and clear obligations to fulfil. Whatever sentiment a Catholic feels is not the principal thing, but a natural outcome of truths realized and acted upon. It blossoms forth out of knowledge, the heart following the head. Moreover there is a sense of collectivism which makes Catholics into a corporate body, toward which a spirit of loyalty grows up, and against which a defection would bear the character of treason. Besides this, every Catholic is forewarned from early years of the danger of anti-Catholic reading, and is therefore forearmed. As a rule, when a Catholic finds himself disturbed by something he has read, his first instinct is to fight against its evil effects, or to put his difficulty to a competent priest for solution; and at that stage he is well disposed to accept the answer and put the doubt away. It is only by a process of hardening that he either on the one hand becomes callous to attack, or on the other, deliberately yields to the enemy. As a rule, anti-Catholic ideas, such as incidentally come across his way in the newspapers and magazines, flow off his mind like water off a duck's back, so that on the whole it is a rare thing to find a Catholic—at least in England—becoming a professed and positive unbeliever. In other words, the external causes supposed to explain the lapse of the young Catholic are really not as a rule accountable for such falling away. Nevertheless relapses into neglect and apathy do occur; and if these are not to be accounted for either by immorality or by infidel reading, to what cause must they be ascribed? We have already stated the cause: it is, we repeat, mental atrophy.

V. MENTAL ATROPHY

AND now to explain what we mean by mental atrophy. Atrophy is a medical term which means "withering or wasting away." Sometimes atrophy attacks the whole body, which then becomes reduced to a skeleton. It may also be local, and affect a particular limb or faculty. Atrophy may arise either from want of nourishment or want of use. The occurrence of atrophy is well illustrated in natural science by cases of what is scientifically called "degeneration."

Ray Lankester has written a delightfully interesting book on the subject, from which the following instances may be cited from memory. There is the case of the hermit crab. Originally this crab was like other crabs, equipped with the full complement of claws and pincers for attack and defence, and was perfectly competent to carry on the struggle for existence. But in early life, in order to save trouble, it betook itself to the shelter of an empty whelk-shell, to use as a house of refuge against attack, venturing only to poke its claws out to grab at any small prey which happened to float by. The result was a gradual degeneration of the whole structure of the animal. Its claws, no longer subjected to healthy exercise, dwindled down till they became useless and shapeless appendages. That is a case of atrophy of limbs and faculties due to want of use—Nature's revenge for shirking healthy exercise. Moreover, all this process takes place in the short life of each

individual. What was in youth a sound, well-built, well-equipped, healthy crab becomes in middle life a monstrosity—a hideous, one-sided wretch, living only half a life inside its borrowed shell, and outside that shell incapable of living at all.

A second example, if we remember aright, is a certain parasite which lives on the body of the same crab. This parasite was also originally a creature of independent life. But it was found easier to secure nourishment ready-made by fixing itself on to the body of the degenerate crab, and sucking the life juices out of that, instead of seeking its food in the ordinary way. Again Nature revenged herself on those who seek results without having worked for them. The effect is that this lazy insect's mouth degenerates into a mere suction-pump, its limbs waste away and disappear, its body becomes nothing but a shapeless ball consisting of a stomach and a sack for generating eggs.

Turning now to humanity, it is easy to see that most of our powers are developed by use, and that these powers, if neglected, are gradually lost. If the fingers are bound up for a year they grow together, and the power of using the hand is lost. Thus, in general, a muscle unused loses the power of use; so also the stomach, if fed on thin diet, soon loses its power to digest stronger food. Fish kept in the dark lose their eyes, and the same would doubtless take place in man. But as in bodily functions, even more so is it the case with the mental and emotional faculties. The mind is strengthened by thinking, the emotions intensified by cultivation, the will rendered firm by practice. An intellect deprived of objects of thought, or provided only with objects which are not interesting, becomes dull and inoperative. Unless proper matter is supplied by the mind to give ground for feeling, the feelings become blunted. One who is never exercised in self-

control loses all self-control. Without objects to excite and exercise affection, affection is deadened and the soul becomes callous.

ATROPHY OF CONSCIENCE.

Throughout our life we are perpetually developing or stunting our mental or emotional faculties. In the moral order no better example can be found than what is called a hardened conscience. As far as we can analyse a hardened conscience (as distinguished from a *blinded* conscience) it seems to mean, not that the conscience has ceased to pass judgement on conduct, but that its dictates are disregarded. Not, however, *merely disregarded*, since the most sensitive conscience can also be disregarded. The difference lies in this: Normally speaking, the well-trained mind feels something of a shock when contravening the dictates of conscience. The idea of deliberately doing wrong comes on the mind and feelings with a start, and this uncomfortable feeling is one of the chief protections against sin, just because it thoroughly wakens up the whole man to the situation before him, and prevents him from insensibly drifting into an evil action. By once smothering down this uncomfortable feeling its force is weakened, and repeated smotherings will destroy it altogether. So that the man who in the first instance could not act against his conscience without feeling extremely uncomfortable ends in being able to "smile and smile and be a villain."

Two effects have thus been produced. The active power of the will has been weakened by disuse, and the passive faculty of feeling shocked at wrongdoing has been worn out by repetition, according to Butler's famous maxim that "the active faculties are strengthened, and the passive faculties weakened by repetition of acts." In either instance it is a case of moral atrophy.

The reader must excuse the philosophical nature of this part, as it is a philosophical subject, and we must go on for another paragraph. Well, then, if we turn from the feelings to the mind, the same process takes place. Conscience, though associated with the feeling we have described, is not in itself a feeling, but a judgement made by the intellect. It is, in other words, a statement of facts or of knowledge as to the rightness or wrongness of a given action. But, being an active faculty, it gets rusty with neglect—just as our mind gets rusty in mathematics if we never practise them. A man who loses regard for doing right will gradually cease to pass judgement in his own actions, and so conscience ceases to work. This is a case of mental atrophy, and is known among theologians as the blinded conscience (*conscientia obcecata*). Again, the feeling or sentiment which accompanies conscience is a passive faculty. Feeling is excited by thought, and does not actively initiate itself. By repeated smotherings feeling dies away, and this is a case of moral atrophy, called by theologians the hardened conscience (*conscientia obdurata*).

Thirdly, conscience, in the popular meaning of the term, includes both the elements—thought and feeling. The atrophy of the one promotes the atrophy of the other. The deadening of thought diminishes the feeling it would otherwise create. The deadening of the feeling diminishes the thought, since, according to Cicero, “our minds think most of the things we care for most,” and *vice versâ*. But the important thing to remember for our present purpose is that thought comes first and feeling second; knowledge precedes and is the basis of emotion; the head precedes the heart, and the heart depends for its functions on the head.

Now we can suppose two men, both of whom in matters of religion have come to a state of complete

neglect. The first begins by a failure in morality. He gets used to doing wrong, not through ignorance or want of thought, but through smothering down his feeling and getting used to contravening the verdict of conscience without discomfort. Here the failure comes from a crooked will: the hardened conscience comes first, and reacts so as to induce the blinded conscience afterwards.

LOSS OF TASTE FOR RELIGION.

That is the first case; but it is not the one we wish to study, and not the one specially typical in the present age. The other is when there is no failure in morality, except, of course, the sin of neglecting religion. There is no sense of temptation arising from reading anti-religious literature. The decline does not come immediately from an evil will or from the killing down of feeling. Nevertheless, religion seems to lose grip, influence, power. It ceases to appeal, it ceases to excite emotion or rouse devotion. A sort of apathy steals on the soul, the man does not know why or how. He does not positively intend to give up religion, even while he is doing so. He knows sufficiently that he is on the downward grade, but feels no disposition to arrest the accelerating descent. You tell him to pray. In accordance with your wish he does so for the moment. But there is no heart in it, and apparently no power to put heart into it. The whole subject of religion has become stale, and the whole soul is ineffably bored with the subject. A sudden shock might rouse him, but no shock comes, and a sort of numbness of soul intervenes, gradually deepening into coma.

The remarkable thing is that in every other subject, in every other occupation, the man is full of energy and interest. He has no excuse of ill health, or a

broken-down constitution, or softening of the brain. His enjoyment of life is keen and sustained, and there is nothing the matter with him except this: that the subject of religion palls on him and bores him; and he is never happy till it is dismissed from his mind. He is like a man who has been listening to Chopin's Funeral March, or Beethoven's Pathétique Sonata fumbled out three times a day for a month by an execrable pianist next door: while admiring both Beethoven and Chopin exceedingly, he now begins to loathe their very names. He is like the clerk who has been working at accounts till his brain reels, and to whom figures have become a nightmare. He is like one who has been over-practising at cricket and has become stale. He finds in himself no further susceptibility for religion, just like those rare specimens of humanity who have no ear for music, and only know that the band is playing "God save the King" because the people stand up or take off their hats. As there are others who have no appreciation of poetry and who are lost in a picture-gallery: so this man has become a blank on one point only, and that is on religion.

Let it be conceded that the picture is that of an extreme case—not, be it observed, a rare case: we have been told of five such cases within one month falling within the personal experience of one priest in one town. But the case is typical of a multitude of other cases—in fact, it represents the vast majority of cases wherever there is a defection of educated Catholics at the present day. And all these cases we ascribe to mental atrophy.

HOW MENTAL ATROPHY IS BROUGHT ON.

We must pass a step further, and explain how this mental atrophy comes about. The more a faculty is

developed, the more material and the higher standard of material is required to work upon in order to keep in health. How is it the French schoolboy can thrive on a tenth of the exercise required by the English schoolboy? Simply because the athletic faculty is developed less in the one than in the other. Why is it that the old-fashioned country squire can live a slow life in the country which to the London merchant is intolerably dull? Simply because the city man has developed his faculty for affairs and the countryman has not developed. How is it that the remote Connemara peasant can live apart from the world and its turmoil without caring a straw for anything outside his mountain glen, while the child who has come back to the old country from America feels deeply miserable without his morning paper? It is only because the emigrant has developed the faculty of a wider knowledge which demands a constant supply of news. Similarly, why should the man of taste feel a sense of want if removed from pictures and music and literature? He never felt that need until he had developed his æsthetic powers. Thus it is all round: the development of a faculty creates a new need, which must be satisfied, or the faculty atrophies for lack of material to work its extended powers upon.

What applies in other departments applies in religion. In religion, as we have already hinted, the life of the heart and affections depends on the life of the mind; the heart is fed by the head; the feelings are a product of knowledge. The old Irish Biddy knows her religion in its simplest form. A small stock of elementary ideas suffices to furnish her with food for the deepest devotion. Outside the elements of the Catechism she is extremely ignorant; but what she knows is proportional to her mental development, and suffices for the full expansion of her affections. Take, now, a highly

developed intellect. To him Biddy's stock of religious ideas would be miserably inadequate. The greater calibre and activity of his mind demands a wider and a deeper scope. He must penetrate into the underlying truth; he must understand the relation of one idea to another. What he needs is something short of the knowledge of the trained theologian, but something midway between that and the simple ideas of Biddy. What to the peasant mind would be full mental furniture is to the educated intellect bare walls and a cutty stool. What in Biddy is sufficient for full mental activity is starvation to him. There is not in such scanty and outlined knowledge enough to keep him from intellectual torpor. Thus the simple Catechism is a treasure of knowledge to the undeveloped mind; to the developed mind it is merely the table of contents of a larger book which he must read in order to keep his mind in a state of vital activity.

The reader will by this time be guessing the drift of our argument. But another general consideration is required before the cause of this mental atrophy can be properly explained.

VI. THE CALAMITY OF EDUCATION

WE allude to one of the incidental disadvantages of improved education. It is a point on which so little thought seems to have been expended, that the subject really has to be worked out *ab ovo*, as we do not remember to have come across any treatment of it.

The disadvantage of education which people usually insist upon is this: that education, by raising men's capacities, is creating an ambition for higher employments, or what are conventionally regarded as such. The son of the labourer must now become a skilled artizan; the son of the skilled artizan ambitions stupidly to be a clerk; the son of a shopkeeper aims at a learned profession. If education goes on in this way, we shall soon get nobody to perform the lower functions of life, except as a last resort, after having tried something else higher and failed. We shall soon have inaugurated an era of B.A. cabmen, and LL.D. street sweepers, and D.D. ploughmen—all disappointed men, and discontented with the cruelty of their lot.

But all this concerns only the outward life. We have been overlooking another and analogous consequence which concerns the inner life of the mind. Every stage of intellectual development raises the mental activity, and increases the demand for greater mental exercise in order to keep the mind in health. The savage mind requires no feeding. It can lie dormant for hours and days, waking up into a flash of activity when there is

an enemy to circumvent, or a tiger to kill, or a wigwam to repair, or a tomahawk to construct. The coolie can lie in the sun and doze or stand or squat for hours till something happens ; his mind is either a blank, or else engaged in the stationary contemplation of some idea resting in the intellect and appreciated there, but not discoursed about. He muses ; he does not think. But once let education turn up the fallow soil and rouse the latent power. Give the aboriginal stagnation of his mind a stirring up with the long pole of a schooling in grammar and mathematics and literature, and the waste of time will become to him a living question, as it is to the educated European. And then to feed his mind with ideas regularly, at a certain rate, will be a necessary condition of mental health ; and a failure to feed his mind with ideas will mean intellectual stagnation and mental rot. A new appetite has been created in him ; and an appetite means a demand for food, which, if not satisfied, will result in hunger, and waste unrenewed, and degeneration, and stagnation, and morbidity, and mental atrophy.

MENTAL CRAVINGS.

The perusal of newspapers and novels, and the thirst for news and reading and conversation—these are all products of this new craving, this new hunger for a new necessary of life. The hunger of the mind demands food. It may be that the mental training has not been deep ; and hence a choice of thin and gruelly food. But the hunger is there and must be satisfied. It is a demand for new ideas, for new facts, for new relations between ideas or facts. And the supply must be made equal to the demand ; or the only consequence will be mental atrophy. As the development of the athletic faculty increases the demand for football or hockey as a

necessary of bodily health, though previous to this development, health was possible without football or hockey, so the development of intellectual activity increases the demand for mental pabulum as a necessary of mental health, though before that development took place little or no supply of ideas was required, and the mind could preserve its health without them.

It therefore comes to this. Reading is not any longer a luxury but a necessity—a necessity induced by the development of the intellect by education. We have strewn the dragon's teeth and they have sprung up armed men. We have sown the wind and are reaping the whirlwind. We have kindled the fire and must watch the burning of the wood. Intellectual development may be a good thing. Theoretically it is a good thing. But if we have forced the process before we were ready for the consequences, we must take those consequences with nothing but our own want of foresight to blame. They say, in homely country phrase, that "If a boy wants to grow he must put dung in his boots." But if he does so and grows in consequence, the tailor's bill must come in for new clothes, or the boy will find his coat-tails about his neck. They say also that a mustard plaster makes the beard grow. A young man of our acquaintance once tried it; and thereby imposed on himself the obligation of shaving twice a day all his life.

Our modern education is acting in much the same manner. We are developing a brain activity which clamours for material to work on; and yet at the same time supplying food of the most unselected description, and also keeping men so busy that they have no time to select, while the pedagogue has no time to teach his pupils how to choose. The result is that the world is rapidly becoming peopled with packs of ravening intellectual wolves eager only for food and unable to

rest without it, and ravaging round to devour whatever they can get, taking whatever first comes in their way, regardless of quality, and therefore sure to pick up nine-tenths rubbish, or worse than rubbish—slow poison. Moreover, being engaged all day in a grim struggle for existence, and trying to throw off the effects of over-pressure for the rest of their time, they cannot set to work methodically with a proper and beneficial course of reading whereby to satisfy the craving of a newly awakened mental activity. Even if they have been taught at school what books are worth reading, they are physically too jaded to go out of their way in quest of them. And so they take the path of least resistance; and finding plenty of light and ephemeral fodder in their way at every turn, they devour it with avidity to keep the mental wolf from the door.

NOVELTY *versus* OLD TRUTH.

Now let us enter a little deeper into the matter. When we combine this new mental activity and its consequent craving for mental food with the high pressure of modern life both business and social, and its jading effect on body and mind, the result is that modern educated humanity is easily bored by anything which is tedious, slow, stale or platitudinous. The old musing habit has given place to the habit of inquiry. Our ancestors could take an old truth, chew it without interruption like a betel quid, ponder over it for years, with relish, but without mental progress. Instead of craving for new matter, or postulating fresh knowledge to assimilate, the old folks loved to read in books and to hear in sermons the same good old things they have read and heard before. Old Farmer Gibbons was rather disturbed than pleased to learn anything new. His best praise of a sermon was “Ay, that’s a fact.

I've heard that afore. I mind as how Father O'Flynn said the same—it's nigh sixty years gone, when I was a lad in short clothes." His worst blame was: "Well, did any one ever hear such a thing afore? They never said owt o' that sort of thing in my days. Them young Fathers!—what's it all coming to?" Things are changed for the "schooled scholard" who calls himself the son of Farmer Gibbons, but is rather ashamed of his family, and puts on cuffs and scarlet tie and plated ring on Sundays and wants to be a clerk. That young man was born with a brain like his father's—solid but not over corrugated, and slow in its movements like a stage coach going up-hill. Then came his schooling days; and they stirred up the grey matter, and deepened the grooves, and quickened the electric currents, and developed a sudden activity not inherited but acquired. Then grew the appetite for mental fodder—raw material for the new brain energy to work on. He is now a young man, and he finds this fodder in the newspaper and the penny novel. Progress in vitality has gone on, and progress in the supply of novelties to feed the curiosity and give perpetual stimulus to the new faculty. He finds the newspaper and the novel interesting and fresh every time he takes either up. But he has acquired a taste for mental sensations and excitements just like a man who has taken to drink. Apart from this excitement things are dull and boresome. Even in his paper he condemns as dull or stale whatever he has read yesterday, and develops a sense of irksomeness and an instinctive disgust for truths he has heard before.

What is true of the farmer's son is true of those whose parents were educated people, if—as is usually the case—the education of the son has not been really first-class. Education properly so called must develop the mind not only in its activity for acquiring knowledge but also in its digestive power. Not only must the mind be roused

to quickness of apprehension, but also to steadiness of contemplation. A well-educated mind does not merely crave for new things and thoughts, but takes a still higher pleasure in turning over the thoughts already acquired—comparing them, seeing their deeper meaning, finding new aspects and new connections. Hence the really educated mind is not bored by old truths. Together with the inquiring faculty which the new system of school boards, examinations, and cram has developed, the old contemplative or ruminating faculty has also been developed. The young man has lost nothing of the solidity of his father's mind but added to it a new brilliance. He loves new information, but looks to a permanent value to be worked out of it by thought. He is not bored because he has heard something before. He does not call all permanent truth a platitude and does not think it stale, simply because he enjoys the process of masticating and digesting truth as much as the process of tasting it. But your school-board brood of intellectual fledgelings, your progeny born of competitive and cram methods—in short, your typical product of modern education—instead of resembling a healthy specimen of humanity who eats largely and digests powerfully and turns everything he devours into solid flesh and bone and blood, resembles rather a wretched victim of diabetes or tapeworm, who, impelled by an artificially induced hunger-madness, ravenously devours ten times more food than a well-conditioned labouring man, but gets no nourishment out of it for his own building-up, and only provides the food by which his deadliest enemy inside him can flourish and increase.

ONE-SIDED DEVELOPMENT.

This, then, is the mischief in which all our national and private expenditure of time and money, and the

wearing out of the stamina of our children, seems to result. To speak thus against the education movement will of course seem to smack of the starkest obscurantism or retrogressionism. Be it so. We are not opposing education, but what we say is that the entire trend of modern education, as it is known to us, is a calamity; just because it is of its very nature creating a generation of one-sided monstrosities, no less hideous and calamitous in the mental order than dwarfed hunchbacks are in the corporeal order. All the development is in one part of the brain. The faculties developed are all faculties of acquisition, none of them faculties of assimilation, none of contemplation, none of inner penetration, none of analytic or synthetic examination, none of ratiocination. The mental world issuing from existing methods is like a world where there are unlimited brick-makers and brick-bakers and brick-carriers, and scaffold-makers and mortar-mixers and hod-carriers, but not a single man who can use a trowel to build up these materials into a wall. It is altogether a one-sided development; and all one-sided developments, by the just and vengeful laws of nature, inevitably mean the ruin of the other and undeveloped side. There is only a sum total amount of available power in one human brain; and if all the exercise goes to one part, all the available nourishment follows; the other and neglected parts are not only unexercised but also unnourished; and so the atrophy of one part of the mental machinery is the inevitable result.

SCHOOL LIFE AND AFTER.

And how does this apply to religion? It is as simple and as clear as daylight. The mentally atrophied adult finds religion a bore, because as it exists in his mind it is all stale. He once learnt it in his Catechism as a school task, but never acquired the feeling that it was interesting.

Even if the teacher tried to make it as interesting as possible, it never was as interesting as the Geographical Reader—because the Reader always was new and the Catechism always was old. It is not that religious instruction was in itself calculated to breed disgust, but because on the one hand the intellect of the child was taught to feel a craving for the acquisition of new information, and on the other hand the Catechism was after a certain period mere repetition, and came to be regarded as a task to be recited by rote. Moreover, in consequence of the scrambling character of school work, the contemplative faculties of the child were practically neglected; and yet the continued appreciation of the truths of religion depended solely on this contemplative faculty. He loathed his other lessons, too, just because they were made matters of rote and memory, and became stale in turn; but in these secular matters no evil followed, except that in after life the boy hated study because it was a bore. But in religious matters the consequences were radical and calamitous; just because in learning his religion he failed to experience a sense of interest in it, which, once felt, would have developed in later life.

Now let us see how this mental atrophy theory works out in the case of a boy who has left school with every promise for the future.

There is first the freshness of life at a time when the youth is meeting life for the first time. This novelty just suits the over-developed faculty, which it feeds, and develops still further. Then there is the bustle of business and the excitement of the struggle for existence. This again feeds and further develops the one-sided growth. Then there is the daily paper with its perpetual kaleidoscope of novelty—another help to one-sided development. Then there is the novel. Everything is in favour of the acquisitive faculty; and because every-

thing feeds it and devolops it, it grows more and more. Novelty and change and newness of ideas is the mania of the one-sided mind. There is an ever-increasing distaste for old ideas and truths once heard, because the faculty which delights in contemplating and intensifying is undeveloped and half atrophied already, and cannot be got into working order. When the youth turns from the perpetual rush of novelties, which every day brings forth, to the religion which he learnt at home and at school and which has not changed from that day to this, the full bias of his mind is instinctively against it. It is dull. It is old. It is unenlightening. It is unprogressive. It appeals to none of his instincts of mind. It awakens his intellect no more than colours to the blind man or sounds to the deaf. He practically lacks the mental machinery which it is calculated to set in motion, as a bell without its battery has lost connection with the button at the door, or a clock run down fails to answer to the pendulum. It means nothing more to him than do words to one who has no power to connect them with ideas. He is deaf to its appeal, as Baal was deaf on Carmel, because Baal had not the ears with which to hear. In turning from the bustle of life to the calm of religion, he passes from the brilliance of the theatre to the desolate darkness of the unlighted street. Excessively bored, he turns back to the door, re-enters the dress-circle, and feels an instantaneous relief. His only effort is to forget the uncomfortable sensation he has experienced in the interval.

Something of religious practice may survive out of habit and the sense of duty. He remembers that in younger days there were pleasures in devotion which are now past; and his better self retains a lingering desire that they should return. He recognizes that somehow things have changed for the worse. He makes an effort, and may by prolonged heroism succeed in resisting the

tendency which has grown into his life. How it came about he does not know. What appears certain is that whereas business, society, amusement, newspapers, novels, are all extremely interesting to him and refreshing and reviving, somehow or other all taste for religion has evaporated like the dew of the morning; whereas in years past he used to feel a sort of satisfaction in prayers and going to church, now the very mention of these things creates a nausea; he not only cannot bring himself to carry out his religious duties, but finds himself ineffably bored at the very mention of them. He would be rather glad if he could get out of this strange state; but he feels as incapable of bestirring himself in the matter as a man in a dream. He can listen to the urgings of the parish priest without feeling the least ill-will, and at the same time without the least emotion. His whole soul, so smart and wide awake and energetic as soon as he hears of a rise in railway shares or the news of Eastern complications, feels as limp and flabby when this subject of religion is broached as if it were porridge poured out on a plate. He hopes to do better some day, but at present really nothing can be done. It would in fact be better to talk about something else.

Those of our readers who have not met with such cases, or have not given careful study to them, will hardly take this description in earnest. But we assure them that every word is seriously meant. We sincerely believe that the layman's mind in many cases is simply rotting as regards religion, and that the rotting process is due to our modern education, in which the acquisitive faculty is being developed and the contemplative faculties are being absolutely neglected. The disease affects only a percentage, because in most cases education fails to have any marked effect; again because in many people the religious instinct is naturally strong. But, given cases in which education does succeed in awakening the

faculties and there is no strong religious instinct, we believe that education is responsible for loss of religion to a large extent.

This thesis is maintained by unbelievers also, but in a contrary sense. According to them, education is hostile to religion because it enlightens the mind to be critical, and to reject religious belief because it then appears as an exploded myth. This we utterly disbelieve. There are cases in which a smattering of anti-religious literature produces religious disbelief, and no doubt such cases are common outside the Church. But as we have said, the cases which seem to be typical among decadent Catholics are not usually of this kind but are of the type we have just been at pains to analyze; and these are not only frequent, but are inexplicable on any of the grounds usually assigned.

.VII. MENTAL FOOD AND EXERCISE

It may be said that almost all cases of religious decline, even the apparently simple ones, involve something of mental atrophy. Few people would be so unreasonable as to neglect the duties of their religion if they fully realized the meaning of their neglect. Theologians say that no Catholic who is in a sane state of mind can lose his faith or give up his religion without committing sin; and it must be understood that what we call mental atrophy does not remove all responsibility from those who are victims of it. Of course if the atrophy is complete, the mind is altogether gone and the man becomes an idiot. But those suffering from the malady we are studying would deeply resent the imputation that they were idiots; and in fact their smartness in other affairs of life is a clear proof that they could if they wished throw off the sluggishness of their minds in regard to religion. The only question is how to get them to make the effort, and how by anticipation to prevent them from getting into this lamentable condition.

The case might be illustrated from other departments. An employee is sluggish in carrying out his business duties. His master warns him that unless he wakens up he will receive notice of dismissal without a testimonial. This will probably provide the stimulus needed. The effort is made, and the situation saved. Similarly a father is negligent about the training of his children. When he is made to realize his responsibilities by finding

his eldest son turning out a rake and a disgrace to the family, he is moved by the gravity of the situation, and so bestirs himself, before it is too late, to prevent the rest of his boys from going the same way of perdition. Similarly in the case of one who has lost all taste for religion. Sometimes a stirring sermon, a sudden death in the family, a loss of fortune, or a dangerous illness, will so shake the whole man to the foundations of his soul that without more ado he becomes a changed man. He realizes now vividly what before was dim in his mind. He feels intensely now what before he did not feel at all. This is enough. The mind is awakened, and the feelings follow the mind. He now sees the folly of his neglect in a way which makes it easy for him to do what before was painful and intolerable.

OVERWORK AND UNDERWORK.

Now some of these remedies rest in the hands of God, others can be secured by prayer, or by personal influence on the part of friends and the clergy. But what we want to do is to go deeper into the question, treating the case psychologically, just as one would treat any other case of, say, nervous or constitutional debility, and thereby arriving at some practical conclusions helpful both to remove this mental atrophy and if possible to anticipate and prevent it.

Doctors have frequently to deal with such cases. They are called in to a patient who has nothing specific the matter with him—no lung disease, or heart disease, or kidney disease—but is simply *blasé*, as the French say. The cases are generally of two kinds: either the system is run down from want of proper care, or it is broken down by overstrain. In the first case what is wanted is nourishment, fresh air and exercise; in the second case a change, a rest and a period of light amuse-

ment. If we confine attention to the mind alone, the case resolves itself into the same alternatives. The mind becomes torpid for want of stimulant when an active intellect is deprived of its field of interest—thus “getting rusty” for want of exercise, and being starved for want of mental food. On the other hand the mind can be jaded by over-exertion, and becomes “stale” through too incessant application. Lastly, turning to the religious mind, the two alternatives can be found repeated. Intensely devout souls sometimes out of zeal aspire to a degree of recollection which the physical structure of their brains will not stand, and are obliged to diminish or even to cease all efforts in that direction for a time, in order to recover their normal condition of health. Seeing that they have indiscreetly attempted more than they were capable of in the way of contemplation, they learn to temper their devotional exercises to their strength, and to turn their spiritual energies in more active and less contemplative directions. Others, on the contrary, so neglect to feed their minds with spiritual thought as to become dry and sluggish, and to lose the spring and vitality in matters of devotion; gradually ceasing to feel the influence of religious motives, just because they have let religious motives drop out of their minds. Obviously the mental atrophy we are studying does not belong to the first but to the latter category, since atrophy is a wasting away due not to *overwork* but to *underwork*—to want of nourishment, want of stimulus, want of exercise.

Of course here again it may be that torpor of mind in one department of the brain may come from overwork in some other part. Paddling a canoe exercises the chest and arms, and bicycling exercises the legs; but either kind of exercise tires the whole body so as to destroy all disposition to take exercise of a more general kind. So also a man who is overworked in his business may feel

jaded all round, and neglect walking or sport, and this may seriously interfere with freshness in his devotions. In fact there are, we know, numbers of overworked specimens of humanity whose lives are turned into a degrading slavery by continual toil and prolonged hours. Their jaded bodies after a day's work are incapable of all serious exertion, and are only fit to doze and vegetate till the clock moves round once more and the hated task has to be renewed. Then the fear of losing their means of sustenance galvanizes them into a hurried scramble out of bed, a bolted breakfast, and a rush to catch the latest available train or tram to bring them to their place of business just not too late. If such victims of high pressure bring an excuse why they fail in their religious duties, what can one do but shower curses on the rule of Mammon, and tell them with deep sympathy to do what they can to keep up their devotional spirit, and to hope for better days. It is different with the Catholic in high life who wears out all stamina in one perpetual round of exhausting social engagements and then brings a like excuse. It is different too with the prosperous merchant who makes his business a slavery to wealth. These cases might merit separate treatment, or in fact might be indirectly reduced to mental atrophy brought on by overwork. However, without drawing too fine distinctions as to the causes at work, we want to take men as we find them—jaded, *blasé*, or atrophied in regard to religion; then to see what can be done to counteract this condition as it exists; and finally to look back to earlier years and see how we can prevent such a state from coming on.

THE STIMULUS OF READING.

We have in the first instance a very simple suggestion to make—so simple that our readers might wonder why

we have kept it back so long. Take the jaded business man, and see what he instinctively turns to when he is too tired to do hard work, and not tired enough to go to sleep. His obvious resort—if he is in any degree an educated man—is to take up a book and read. Were his mind undeveloped by education, he would find reading a pain, and would be content to drowse away the long hours till imperious necessity again called him out to work. But because his brain has been awakened to feel an appetite for thoughts and ideas, he finds in reading a stimulus which, while it tires him out in one way, refreshes him in another—just as hockey tires the athlete's limbs, but makes him a fresher man after the exertion is over.

The truth here stated has also its wider application. Reading is a source of something more than mental vitality. It affects the feelings also, and through them the springs of action and the conduct. How many boys are led into forming schemes for running away to sea by the stories of sea life they have read? How many crimes—robberies and murders and suicides—are due to the influence of sensational tales? How many love-makings spring from the love-makings of romances? On the other hand, how many times does the reading of the lives of heroes instil heroism into the reader? Men's careers are often sensibly affected by what they have read in early life, whether for good or evil. The patriotism of the ancient tribes was fed and developed by the stories of the minstrel bards; and now also the loyalty of any citizen is kept up by the knowledge of his country's history. Reading conveys knowledge, and knowledge is a perpetual spring of new enterprise in every direction; it fills a man's mind with ideas, and thus excites feeling, and stirs energy, and initiates action. Many a man sits down limp and listless to read, and rises from his reading brisk,

stimulated, and refreshed by the ideas he has imbibed from a book.

And what is true in every other matter is true also in matters of religion. If men get interested in their religion as they are interested in other things the rest will naturally follow; they will read, and get to know something about it, become interested, and wish to read and know more. Not only will their minds be fed with knowledge, but their appreciation will grow with their knowledge and their loyalty will be aroused; they will become enthusiastic about it and wish to promote it in the world, and begin to see ways in which it can be promoted; and when in that frame of mind they will recognize the anomaly of neglecting it on their own part. Knowledge will breed interest, and interest will breed appreciation, and appreciation will breed loyal pride, and loyal pride will breed enthusiasm and make away with mental atrophy and deadness of feeling. Wishing also to adorn what they appreciate and love, they will find in the fulfilment of their religious duties such satisfaction as the loyal soldier feels in doing his duty in the service; and there will be an end of this wretched torpor which now steals over so many souls just because their minds are empty of religious ideas. Their starved souls are wanting in appreciation of a thing they think and know so little about; and their feelings are dead because there is nothing in their minds to rouse feeling, nothing to excite interest, nothing to create loyalty, nothing to stir up enthusiasm.

DEAD HEART AND EMPTY HEAD.

In short, our conclusion is that many Christians are dead in heart because they are empty in head; and that the natural means for curing mental atrophy is to feed the mind with Catholic knowledge—to furnish

them with something to think about and to take interest in and to get enthusiastic about in the Catholic faith.

This conclusion will be well borne out by those who have had to deal with the class of people we have been studying. With the simple masses of the faithful the case is different. Their intellectual faculties have not been excited by education—at least not to a large extent. Their mental furniture is of the simplest, the tenour of their mental lives tranquil and contemplative. There is nothing of the highly strung temperament about them. Everything moves slowly with them. They grasp religious truth in simple items, and need no mental stimulant to keep up their interest. They are placid and patient, and are not easily bored. They do not suffer from a feverish impatience about waste of time. They feel the day roomy enough and to spare. Going to church is on the whole interesting, and possibly more interesting than anything else they might be doing instead. They do not look at their watches often, and do not mind waiting half an hour before service. And above all, they have the capacity of thinking the same old thoughts and reciting the same old prayers over and over again. There is nothing feverish about them. They love what they are used to, and feel no craving for fresh interests and fresh novelties and a continual series of mental stimulants to keep their mind and feelings fresh. And in this they are blessed; they are spared many of the pains and miseries which people of a higher culture have to undergo. For every increase in our culture we have to pay the price. The cultivated ear finds excruciating the instrument out of tune which to the uncultured ear sounds grand. The cultivated eye is pained at want of symmetry or want of proportion, or at the gaudy blend of colours which to the uncultivated eye is delightful.

The man of taste is constantly offended at faults of style in writing and speech which to the uncultivated are magnificent displays of oratory. The well-informed mind chafes over the platitude or the inaccuracy of statement or of reasoning which passes muster to the uninformed. But, above all, the active and developed brain has to suffer from the pains of boredom, whenever it finds itself forced to a thing which furnishes no mental stimulus; and it pronounces "flat, stale, and unprofitable" whatever is not a perennial source of new thought and fresh intellectual interest.

Now it will be found on examination that those Catholics who are in the state of utter apathy regarding religion above described are also utterly lacking in intellectual interest for the religion which they neglect. If they ever knew anything they have either forgotten it or retained only the faintest recollection of it. However interested in other affairs they may be, their minds are utterly wanting in interest on this subject. They never think over Catholic thoughts; never read Catholic books. Their mind is a blank on theology, dogmatic or moral, on Church history, on the lives of the saints. The whole subject is out of their line. With nothing religious in their heads, what wonder that there is also nothing religious in their hearts, seeing that without knowledge there cannot be appreciation, without appreciation there cannot be affection, without affection there cannot be loyalty, without loyalty there cannot be service. Their mental faculty is starved and atrophied; and by this atrophy the whole situation is explained. Food and exercise is what they want. That is all.

VIII. HEAD *versus* HEART

IF, as is sometimes said, there is a tendency among men at the present time to lay too much stress on the intellect as a factor in religion, it may be a fair question to ask whether on the other hand there is not also a tendency to insist too much on the place occupied by the heart? If the case is stated fairly on both sides it will come to this, that neither function can afford to be neglected nor slighted nor despised. But the mistake is to speak as if there were a real opposition between the two. On the one hand, knowledge without love is a dry and profitless knowledge; on the other hand, without knowledge love is impossible. *Nemo amat nisi quod prius cognoscit*, says St. Augustine; or, according to the schoolmen, *ignoti nulla cupido*. Another still more philosophical way of expressing it is to say that the will-powers follow the knowing-powers, or that the will follows the understanding. In popular language, You must know God before you love Him; and, all things being equal, the better the knowledge the greater the love.

Preachers and moralists sometimes take one side and sometimes the other. Sometimes they look at the matter from the side of knowledge, and say that neglect of religion springs from want of instruction. The child who does not know its religion will not keep up its practice. The reason why young men give up their religion is because they have no mental grasp of it.

Others look at the matter from the side of the heart and say that intellectual knowledge is useless unless taken to heart, or erudition is valueless unless accompanied by devotional appreciation. Hence men seldom read themselves into the Church; if they come in, it is rather through prayer and devout aspiration. This is why some people lay so little stress on knowledge and all the stress on devotion. They look with suspicion on knowledge and seem almost to think that it is better to have little than much. They seem to have a distrust of the intellect—an idea induced by the supposed fact that in quarters where the intellect is most cultivated religion weakens, and that religion flourishes in the soil of ignorance and languishes in the soil of learning. This idea is false if it means that ignorance is the mother of devotion; it may be true in the sense that learning diverts the energies in another direction and destroys simplicity; for certainly it may be said that simplicity of mind is the mother of devotion.

THE VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE.

In a matter like this, extreme and exclusive views are sure to be wrong. It must not be forgotten that knowledge, as well as piety, is marked down as among the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; and that, of the two, piety is the more spontaneous and natural to the human mind, while knowledge is the one which most depends on the industry of acquisition. Again, it must not be forgotten that piety, to be sound, depends on knowledge; and that, besides the knowledge which puffs up, there is knowledge which edifies. Nor must the stress which Christ our Lord lays on the function of Truth be ignored; or that truth, however spiritual, is grasped only through the intellect understanding the ideas contained in the doctrines of the faith. It is, in short, a

commonplace among spiritual writers that the intellect must precede and furnish matter for the affections; while philosophically the will is only moved to love the good by the mental apprehension of the true. Nor, when we come to define the limits of profitable knowledge, is it right to draw too close a line. The bare essentials may be found in the Catechism, but the mind does not practically flourish on bare essentials. In fact, bare essentials can hardly be grasped except parrot-wise, unless a wider circle of explanation and illustration is added. There is not much life or light in succinct theological propositions. The dogmatic facts of the Incarnation and Redemption move us not as propositions but as the historical realities of the Gospel narrative. The authority of the Church impresses us not in a theological thesis but in the living actualities of Church history. Our enthusiasm for the Papacy is not the product of controversial proof but of the living personality of the sovereign Pontiffs from St. Peter to Pius X. A scientific treatise on asceticism is cold compared with the living practice of the saints. It is, in short, a comprehensive and concrete knowledge of the things of religion which is the breeding-ground of Catholic devotion. The dry propositions of the Catechism are only the nucleus round which this knowledge is to be centred.

Hence anything like a tacit depreciation of the intellect in matters of religion is a thing to be avoided. There is a species of intellectualism abroad which is really the conceit of superficiality, and the little knowledge which is a dangerous thing. But even this is to be cured not by depreciating the intellect but by giving the intellect a better training. There is the sceptical habit of mind which wants a demonstration to the hilt for things which do not admit of such demonstration, and which refuses to accept a moral or cumulative proof

even though no other proof is to be had. There is the cocksureness of the man in the street, who thinks himself a philosopher because he has caught up a few modern scientific phrases and has read a sixpenny pamphlet on materialism or the reign of law in the universe. Lastly, there is the amateur theologian who has skimmed through a book or two and thinks himself in a position to disagree with St. Thomas and prefer Scotus on this or that point, and so on. In our experience, however, Catholic laymen of this spurious intellectual stamp are rare. Whatever may be the case with individuals, we do not believe that Catholic laymen as a rule suffer shipwreck of their faith through too much intellectuality. The case seems to us all the other way. They suffer from too little intellectuality. Their decline comes through neglect to use their brains in matters of religion and not through using their brains too much. Let us put the matter to a practical test. We ask whether in the experience of our readers the following picture is not true to the life.

THE SCANDAL OF IGNORANCE.

A young Catholic betrays a remarkable ignorance of English History. He imagines that William the Conqueror lived after the wars of the Roses, or that the Council of Clarendon was contemporary with the author of the Clarendon papers. He has no idea when or how the American colonies broke off their allegiance, or how we came to possess India. In other subjects he betrays similar deficiencies. In continental history his mind is a blank. In geography he answers that Lyons is in the wild prairies of Africa, that Dresden is in China, that Bombay is off the coast of Brazil. His writing is scrawly, and he spells *received* with an s. How is such a specimen regarded? Certainly as a disgrace to

the family, and a laughing-stock to any business man to whom he applies for a situation. Till he is sent to school again his prospects are ruined, unless he cares to become a hawking book-agent or a shopkeeper's assistant.

But suppose we take the same youth—or a thoroughly first class matriculator, a lad who has successfully passed his examinations, it is all the same—and interrogate him on subjects connected with his religion. Of course we expect him to know the main answers in the Catechism, which he learnt by heart. But if he excuses himself by saying he has forgotten them, the fact is accepted with satisfaction. If the excuse is not received with complete complacency, at least the family does not begin to blush up to the roots of its hair, or declare the young hopeful a disgrace to his bringing up. But let us inquire further. Let us ask him a few leading questions on the history of his own religion—what he can tell about the spread of the faith in the first six centuries—what he knows about the conversion of the Goths—what he understands by the schoolmen—how and when the Reformation came about—what was the Council of Trent—what is the difference between the Protestant Bible and ours—how the Holy See acquired and how it lost its patrimony—what are the Eastern Churches, and how did they come into existence. Or ask him which are the chief Orders in the Church; their founders, and the date and purpose of their foundation. Ask him what a Concordat is, and between whom and for what object.

Now, suppose the boy could only stare and wonder what you were talking about, how would you take his abyssmal ignorance of these elementary questions in Church history—you, fond parents, who are horrified at a similar ignorance when it concerns the Plantagenet kings or the Parliamentary struggle, or the Revolution of 1688?

HOW DO WE TAKE IT?

At present we are abstracting altogether from the question as to what children are taught in Catholic schools, or what there is time to teach. What we are concerned with is the Catholic youth as we often find him after he has left school. We take that typical youth and make an inventory of his intellectual stock; first in secular knowledge, than in religious knowledge. In order to pass as an educated *man* we find he must be well grounded in a catalogue of subjects, and must be a blank in none of them. In order to pass as an educated *Catholic* what is demanded by the family and the social circle? He may be as ignorant of Church history as a barn-door fowl. He may be as incapable of giving a reason for the faith that is within him as an organ-blower is of the fugue or symphony for which he has to supply the bellows with wind. Let him know how to say some prayers, how to conduct himself at church, how to give, in his own words or in those of the Catechism, the main bare facts of his creed and commandments; and beyond this let him be as ignorant as a child of three months. How does the family take it? How does the social circle take it? How does the Catholic world take it?

Some may take it very badly. Some may fume at it. Some may be scandalized at it. Some may preach about it. Some may project measures about it, write books about it, found societies about it, go about seeking for the fulcrum wherefrom to shake the world about it. But is it not a fact that on the whole a state of vacuity about the history and principles and ideas of the Catholic religion beyond the bare facts of the Catechism—which in any secular subject would create a scandal and a sense of shame—is staring us in the face whenever and

wherever we care to open our eyes to see it? And yet this state of vacuity is creating no sensation at all amongst us, when it is once clear that the boundaries of the educational code are passed and that we have entered the realm of religious knowledge.

COMPLACENT VACUITY.

We do not say whether it is right or wrong. We are simply clearing up the facts. Laymen as a rule simply do not profess to know anything on the subject. If you analyze their minds you find that they never regarded it as part of the accomplishments of a Catholic gentleman to be informed on such matters. They take for granted that everything is all right—obviously the only safe attitude for them under the circumstances, and a position sound enough in fact. They leave all such matters to the clergy whose business it is to study them. But they no more think it feasible for them to take up the study of their own religion as a hobby than an organ-grinder thinks of taking up the study of counterpoint. It no more occurs to them to conceive the desirability of a mind well stocked with Catholic mental furniture than it occurs to the cabman to study æsthetic anatomy in the broken-winded hack he drives along the street.

Now, if we analyze this state of things a little deeper we shall find it coming to this: that whereas, in all other matters, the worldwide spread of education has made a vast difference to the layman in every other department, mental and social, of his life, in the matter of religious knowledge it has left him exactly where he was in the Middle Ages; and, we may add, in many respects much worse off.

MEDIÆVAL METHODS.

Any one who has read Abbot Gasquet's and other works treating of the means of religious instruction in the Middle Ages, will see what is here intended. In that age—we speak of the eve of the Reformation—the layman, whatever he knew about his religion, at least knew nothing about any other subject, except how to grow corn, and milk cows, and brew ale, and other purely practical affairs, with a smattering of recollections connected with local history within his own and his father's generation. To him religion was the one source of mental activity, such as it was. The church of the village was the finest piece of architecture he knew, except for the still finer church in the nearest market town; with its stained-glass windows and pictures and statues, it was his world of art. The instructions of the parish priest were the only oratory he knew. He learnt his Bible history when he was a boy in the most approved kindergarten method, from the pictures in the church, explained by his pastor or by his parents.

One short reminiscence here. Not long ago it was our fortune to witness a touching little scene in the Catholic church at Kildare, Ireland. A father, poor, ragged and hungry, was taking his boy of eleven or twelve round the empty church, and lifting him up at each of the pictures of the Stations of the Cross, telling him in simple language what each of them meant—himself making a little prayer at each, and showing his child how to do the same. That is the sort of thing we mean. That was the way the mediæval child learnt his religion. Pictures, instructions, miracle plays at the great feasts, furnished his mind with Gospel truths. He may have known much less than an ordinary fairly instructed Catholic does now. But at least there was

no other subject or legion of subjects to fill his brain day by day, to thrust religion out as stale or uninteresting. And above all, the case of a schoolboy crammed with every branch of secular erudition and densely ignorant of the one subject which he ought to know best was then an impossibility.

The question is one of proportion. No one can deny that nowadays secular subjects have the market, and are the official *raison d'être* even of Catholic schools; while religion is a subsidiary subject barely tolerated by the world, and thrust in under protest at some odd half-hour or hour which the inspector condescends to allow. However, it is not so much the actual question how much religious matter is taught—it is the unfortunate subordination of religious to secular subjects which, even though unfortunately it cannot be avoided under modern conditions, has indirectly the effect of increasing the idea, current at the present time, that defects in other and secular accomplishments are felt as things to be ashamed of, while similar or greater ignorance of ecclesiastical or religious subjects is looked upon as a matter of course, even in many families of the educated classes.

SELF-CULTURE.

It must not be forgotten, however, that even in secular matters the culture of the grown-up man is to a large extent a matter of his own making. The school course, even in the public schools, is mostly foundation-work; and unless the boy reads for himself during school and after, he will not make much progress. Those who are pessimistic about Catholic secondary schools and wish to compare them unfavourably with non-Catholic schools, ought to receive a decided check on reading the following remarks, which were published

in a recent issue of the *Pall Mall Magazine*, about the education of English youths :—

“The English public school boy, even after he has spent a year or two or has gone so far as to take a pass degree at a University, is one of the most profoundly ignorant creatures on the face of the earth. Try him in the most ordinary subjects. Of geography he knows only as much as he may have gathered by collecting postage-stamps ; with English literature he is not even on terms of distant politeness ; as often as not he refuses to submit to the conventions of spelling, and the style of composition of his letters would make a house-maid smile. . . . The modern history, whether of his own country or the world in general, is a sealed book to him. Boys go through their schools, pass their examinations at Oxford or Cambridge by dint of cramming, and then they are on your hands like a steel blade of the finest temper but without either point or edge, and with this additional peculiarity, that the time is past when point and edge can be profitably added.”

These boys, be it observed, have had the full grind of a public school course ; and yet see how they turn out, unless during school days and in later years they give their time to reading for themselves. All knowledge of architecture, painting, sculpture ; all knowledge of the industries, all knowledge of travel and biography, all knowledge of science and scientific thought, still more of philosophy ; all knowledge of history outside the range of English history ; all real knowledge of foreign countries ; all knowledge of politics and economics— all this lies outside the narrow range of the school curriculum.

Hence, apart from extended university courses, the man of culture is a self-cultured man, even in these days of education. If he wants to cultivate his taste in artistic subjects he must buy guide-books and take

excursions and study old cathedrals. He must visit the picture-galleries, and take notes, and read criticisms and reform and remodel his judgements. He must attend concerts, and hear the best music, and try to acquire touch with the best composers. No process of lathe-work, or chipping, or hammering can create a furnished mind. The furniture must be inspected, and bought at a price, and arranged in the apartments to the best advantage. It is a matter of acquisition by the individual. All we can do is to encourage and facilitate effort, and induce men to try for themselves.

IX. THE CREATION OF INTEREST

WHEN we pass from secular to religious culture the case is practically the same. If the layman is to be fortified he must himself contribute a considerable amount to the work. We cannot take him in hand whether he wants it or not. We cannot dress him up in scale-armour or bullet-proof clothing and put weapons into his hands and then call him fortified. We can write books, but he must read them; collect pamphlets, but he must buy them; give lectures, but he must attend them; issue papers, but he must subscribe to them; open inquiry offices, but he must apply to them; answer difficulties, but he must propose them.

So long as things remain thus, it is obvious that the only way in which influence can be brought to bear on the educated layman is, somehow or other, to get him interested in his religion. In order to do this it is useless to preach sermons telling him that his religion is most important; that he *ought* to be interested in it, and that if he does not feel this interest he ought to bestir himself and create an interest he does not feel. You might as well talk to a gatepost. Interest in things is the most spontaneous thing in the world—*nascitur non fit*. All interest created by reflex motive—that one *ought* to be interested—is only forced. It is not real genuine interest, and will not last. This is why so many Catholic projects fail—other people's projects too, of course. Some one gets an idea that it would be a good

thing to start some affair or other. The thing is advertized and circulated; there are public meetings and committees, and everybody is told of the duty of Catholics to support the movement by their interest and subscriptions; and people try to be interested, feeling all the time horribly bored. And so the thing is galvanized into a sickly and sporadic life, which lingers on, but gradually sinks deeper and deeper into the grave which is always open for enterprises which do not take on in the public mind.

So far for reflex or artificial interest. Interest to be lively and lasting must be spontaneous; and it must be excited by the thing in which interest is to be taken. If that is not interesting in itself—if moreover the thing is not presented so as to display its interesting character—you may preach that thing till you drop down in a fit, and you will excite no other sentiment in the minds of your hearers than a sense of pity for the disproportion between your efforts and your results.

THE INTEREST OF HISTORY.

Therefore what is wanted is to make the layman *realize* that his religion is an intensely interesting subject. We have to bring home to him by immediate intuition—by personal experience—that it is so. It is useless *telling* him that it is so or *proving* that it is so. He must be made to feel it for himself. We all know what it is to be intensely interested. Let us visit one of the old cathedrals of England, say Canterbury. We follow round the venerable pile a party of tourists unaccompanied by a competent guide. They walk hither and thither, and stare, and *suppose* it is fine—some of them may even *feel* that it is fine; but their impressions are vague and they carry little away. Up comes a scholar (we are thinking, for instance, of the late Father John

Morris), who combines deep erudition on the subject with the power of conveying what he knows in a simple, picturesque and easily intelligible form. Immediately every stone bristles with meaning. The group of tourists begin to live in the past. They enter into the minds of the mediæval architect. They realize his aims and his difficulties; they feel his successes and failures. They go on to find themselves in touch with the people who worshipped there. They trace the details of the tragedy of a Becket. They see the grim faces of the murderers, the flashes of their armour; they hear the tramp of their iron heels in the cloister, rudely breaking upon the song of the monks in choir. They see the blood of the martyr staining the altar-steps as his body welters on the pavement. Then visions float before them of a king, bare-backed, receiving the lashes of penance, and the devout throngs flocking to the shrine of one who had fought out the battle between Church and State, and perished and triumphed in one and the same act. And as they listen and their minds are filled with what they hear, there is one spontaneous verdict drawn from people who never in their lives before realized it, that history is absorbingly interesting. History was interesting all the time, but they had never felt it before; and from that day they will feel a drawing towards history, and will find in it a pleasure and a hobby.

Not seldom such touches of interest, spontaneously felt, lay the foundations for an enthusiasm which will last for life; and may, with due talents and opportunities, develop into great results. Who does not know the story of Schliemann and the unearthing of Troy? The poems of Homer have been the delight of humanity for over two thousand years; but instead of men setting about to dig up the remains of the buried city of Priam, they had taken the story itself, and vivisected it, and

killed it, and pickled it in spirit, and reduced it to something approaching to the skeleton of an exploded myth. Homer became a sort of Platonic universal for the poetic talent of an Ionic tribe; Troy was a city of Utopia—a phantom peopled by phantoms, and no real thing of walls and gates with men inside. Schliemann was but a boy of seven when he spelled out the Iliad at his father's knee. He was absorbed, entranced; the creeps of a thrilling interest ran up and down his face and back as he read. And could it be only a tale? That he would not have. It was too interesting, too living, too real to be a myth. He would go and take his spade, and dig up the soil of Mysia; and the Troy of the Iliad should like the phoenix spring once more out of its ashes and live. That was his life-dream. For it he wore his strength out day and night, worked his way up through the stages of a business he did not care for, as a stepping-stone to a business he did care for. Then he went out, and dug, and realized his dream. Deep down under the mound he burrowed, till his feet stood where Priam and Paris and Helen and Æneas had been; and then came away with the relics of the royal treasury as trophies for the world to see.

That is what can happen when once the soul of a man is smitten with a deep and spontaneous interest. Feeling the fascination of the subject, nothing could weaken his attachment to it. Ill health, loss of money, opposition from Turkish obscurantist officials, apparently insurmountable obstacles on all sides; and above all, the sneers of those who called him the dreamer—all these were nothing to the enthusiasm born of reading Homer at the age of seven.

And this too was nothing but a natural and spontaneous interest, born of a realization of the thing and the interest the thing contained. There was nothing of divine grace in the affair; nothing of life or death temporal or eternal

in it; nothing of salvation or damnation in it, nothing of the enthusiasm of the apostles and martyrs born from the indwelling spirit. It was nothing but a purely natural enthusiasm about a purely natural object—an intellectual interest in a historical problem; the interest of knowledge, and search for more knowledge. And yet the zeal of a soul touched by these motives was such that the proudest moment of his life was when his spade first touched the clay walls of the fifth city in the mound, and turned over the quenched embers of the house of Ucalegon.

And if mental atrophy is the outcome of missing the interest of things, and finding them dull and uninspiring, so mental vitality is the outcome of discovering the interest of things and finding them inspiring. The only question is whether what holds good in other matters does not equally hold good in religion; and whether mental atrophy in religion cannot find its natural remedy in mental interest. Surely it is so. And so the rest of this section shall be devoted to discussing the question whether the Catholic religion does not contain in itself that interest which if once realized will be the natural remedy of a natural disease, bred of an over-wakened faculty which is becoming atrophied through want of proper nourishment; and finally whether the interest which the Catholic religion possesses in itself cannot be brought to bear on the layman's mind.

THE INTEREST OF CHRISTIANITY.

Need we lay stress on the fact that the subject of the Christian religion is surpassed in interest by no other subject? A few words on the point may be given; but few ought to suffice. The testimony of humanity dispenses with elaborate proof. That the earnest and believing Christian should feel such an interest is but

natural; but why should those among the best intellects of Europe who do not believe in Christianity devote their lifelong efforts to its study? It can only be because Christianity contains within itself an interest common to other subjects, and a deeper interest besides. If we confine ourselves to the original credentials of the Christian religion—the New Testament—what a vast literature has been created by almost every verse! Taking nothing but the life of Christ, it may be said that more talent has been expended on its elucidation than on any other subject in the world. If, as is true, much of this expenditure of talent has hardly been to good purpose, that is only the greater evidence of the interest of the theme.

Only those conversant with the critical literature of this subject will appreciate fully the truth of these remarks. We need only say that even when the sceptic, who holds as a first principle that miracles do not happen, has stripped from the Gospels all that is preternatural and reduced Jesus Christ to a mere man, the personal charm of the Prophet of Nazareth is still felt and acknowledged in the residue of the narrative. So that it can be said that, even as a man, the personality of Christ takes a unique place in history, and still holds undiminished sway over the minds of men. This has freely been acknowledged among men to whom Christianity is nothing more than a curiosity of the past. No better proof of the interest belonging to Christianity could be adduced.

Taken then only as a biography, the Gospels afford a theme of absorbing interest irrespective of their dogmatic significance. Taken as historical documents the same holds good of every book of the Old and New Testament. More energy has been expended in the study of the Bible as a collection of historical documents than on any of the classics; for the historical questions

involved are deeper and more significant. Even as mere literature the Bible holds a place of ever-increasing importance. The world is always being ransacked for ancient secular monuments; and the purpose is not so much to learn more of Assyrian or Babylonian or Egyptian history, as to ascertain what light those secular documents throw on the Bible. Where the Sacred Scriptures have ceased to be revered as inspired, they are still the centre point of scholarly investigation.

The same holds good of the history of thought. Every acquisition of new knowledge about other religious and philosophical systems is immediately applied to the elucidation of early Christian teaching. Then if we turn to the history of Europe—political history, the history of civilization—the developments of national life are so inseparably bound up with Christianity, that a historian who treats them without regarding them in this aspect does only the smaller half of his work, and misses its main interest. Even when men have repudiated Christianity as a creed they cannot get rid of its impress. Modern civilization, modern law, modern social and political life, all still bear the marks of their origin, deface those marks how you may. Therefore it matters not what subject we take (unless it be the purely physical and natural sciences and mathematics)—there is none of them, be it history, philosophy, or literature, which is not related to Christianity; and there is no aspect of them which is so interesting as the Christian aspect they contain.

If the present writer may be allowed to give his personal experience, he may say that this has to him proved invariably the case. He has felt the charm of secular history immediately enhanced as soon as its matter was brought into connection with Christianity. Greek philosophy, interesting in itself as an effort of the human mind striving after truth, doubles its interest

when it is confronted with the teaching of Christ and regarded as its preparation. A fantastic theme like Gnosticism immediately grows in interest when regarded as the behaviour of pre-Christian thought in the presence of the Christian revelation. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* derives its chief interest from the study of early Christianity it involves. Of Guizot's *History of Civilization* the same holds good, as also with Hallam's *Middle Ages*. Take the Church out of the history of any country of Europe and half its life is gone. Therefore on purely intellectual lines, and ignoring the eternal interests involved in the theme, the study of Christianity may be fairly placed at the head of the list as regards the interest it contains. And when we consider that the persons in whom we wish to excite interest in Christianity have the advantage of being Catholics by birth or education, and therefore possessing the roots of the deeper interest which springs from belief, the surpassing attraction of the subject such as is felt by the outsider must be doubly felt in their own case.

POPULAR INTEREST.

Assuming then that (to place it at a minimum) the Catholic religion contains in itself a deep interest, we may go on a step further, and say that this interest is not confined to scholars of original or abstruse temperament, but is capable of being popularized with success. Outside the exact sciences and pure metaphysics, there is no subject which in proper hands does not become interesting. The art of popularizing a subject is not difficult. The capacities of the hearer or reader must be considered. Results rather than the process of reaching them must be put forward. Abstruse ideas must be avoided or turned into concrete realities. Technical

terminology must be avoided, and the *thing* must be presented rather than the name—broad outlines rather than detailed studies; narratives rather than chronicles; sketches rather than line engravings; eloquent facts rather than rhetorical elaborations; and above all, the interest of variety in unity, and of freshness in style and manner, are the requirements of success.

We can recall a score or two of books read in past years on subjects purely religious, which to us afforded the absorbing interest of a novel without sacrificing the substance of facts. Henri Lasserre's book on *Our Lady of Lourdes* (Father Sisk's English translation is as fresh as the original) was one which we simply could not put down till finished. Dr. Barry's *History of the Papal Monarchy* (except for the unavoidable intricacy of some parts) has the same charm of style. The same is true of scholarly works like Abbot Gasquet's *Henry VIII* and *The Eve of the Reformation*; and Father Bridgett's *Blessed Thomas More* and *Blessed John Fisher*. In the controversial line nothing can beat Father Bridgett's *Blunders and Forgeries*. We may mention Fouard's *Life of Christ, St. Peter*, and the two volumes on *St. Paul*. In the order of science there is Father Zahm's *Bible Science and Faith*. Cobbett's *History of the Reformation* bristles with interest. Wiseman's works, and the more popular writings of Newman, combine the best in literature and thought with the highest interest. Father Young's *Catholicism and Protestantism Compared*; Gosselin's *Power of the Pope in the Middle Ages*; Wilfred Ward's *Life of W. G. Ward* and of *Cardinal Wiseman*; Lanciani's *Pagan and Christian Rome*; Morris's *à Becket*; *The Autobiography of Father Gerard*—what a power of books there is in our reach, as full of interest as any books can be: and—given the least capacity for being absorbed in anything serious—fuller of interest than most of the novels which

our young man works through under the impression that because they are novels, they *must* be interesting.

It is the idea which repels. People who have not tasted the interest and felt the permanent benefit of good reading—who have no guidance, and no one to start them in the right line—fancy that light literature is refreshing and solid literature is tiring. This is why it is so hard to do anything with the adult layman, unless his education has been of a superior kind, and the foundations of taste and interest have been laid in early life. He has found his first interest in the story-book as a boy, and in the “yellow-back” and the news-column in later years. The world of the *belles lettres* of his own language is unexplored to him, and the world of serious biography and history untouched. He is too old to begin now. We must leave him alone, or do the little we can for him here and there. If we want to do any real good in the matter we must begin earlier. We must begin at school.

This leads us to our final consideration: What can we do to anticipate and prevent mental atrophy in adult life, while the children and boys and youths are under our control at home and at school?

X. TRAINING THE YOUNG

A GREAT deal has been said and written on the vexed question of the religious training of the young. Most that has been said and written has been on the whole discouraging in tone and tendency. This is only natural. There is the evil before us—viz., the falling off which takes place after leaving school. People are bent on finding the cause and how to prevent it. “Bring up a child in the way he should go,” they say, “and when he is old he will not depart from it.” So they turn to the school and the college. They say that the religious instruction must be at fault. They find cases where it is at fault. They draw up indictments against the system or the want of system which they find prevailing. Sometimes it is that Catechism is crowded out by other lessons in the class-room, or crowded out in the teacher’s preparation. No heart, they say, is put into it. It is a rote lesson; the meaning of words is not explained. Sometimes it is the opposite fault. The teacher is not exacting enough, and talks round the subject in a vague and inaccurate manner with the intention of giving instruction, instead of insisting on the lesson by heart. At other times the complaint is that too much time is given and too much repetition is exacted; so that the pupils begin to hate Catechism and call it “stuff.” Thus while some think the words known by heart are the important thing, others clamour for lectures and instructions as more interesting, and better grasped and retained. And

then comes the difficulty that most teachers do not know enough of the subject to make such instructions interesting or profitable, and even put wrong notions into the children's heads. Then with regard to practices of piety; some complain that they are not sufficiently attended to, and others that they are overdone.

Into this medley we do not mean to enter. Every point of the discussion is interminable and ends in nothing. The rote lesson is essential for exactness; the instruction is essential for intelligence and interest. The Catechism ought to be simple in its wording, and yet some parts cannot be made simple in wording from the nature of the case; and the children must get used to the words they will come across in their adult life, in sermons and in books. Practices of piety must go by routine in a school; yet routine has always its disadvantages. Opinions differ as to how much is good and how much defeats its own end. No doubt a considerable amount of good guidance would be derived from finding out the feelings and impressions of the pupils themselves on such matters, which is best done by consulting grown-up boys about their recollections of school life. But no generalizations would be useful on a question which depends so much on the circumstances of each case.

We do not therefore intend to pass strictures on existing methods. Those who have the charge of the young will, if the question is put before their minds, be able to adjust their course according to experience. But certain general principles, which may be difficult to realize in practice, can be stated with profit. These principles are:—

I. WITH REGARD TO INSTRUCTION.

(a) The more the appeal to intelligence in religious subjects the better the results.

(b) The memory work should occupy the earliest stages, and the development of the understanding should become more and more prominent as the classes advance.

II. WITH REGARD TO DEVOTION.

(1) The more spontaneous devotional practices are, the better the results.

(2) The older the pupils the more should the spontaneous element have place.

The reason for these principles is this. In intellectual matters memory is strongest in the young; yet only that which has been understood remains in the adult mind. Again, in devotional matters routine is useful for the beginning of a habit; but habits acquired by routine soon die out when routine ceases; while what is taken up spontaneously has an internal spring which is likely to last. Underlying the whole is the root principle that, in intellect and memory as well as in practice, people only keep up what has become interesting to them. And interest is awakened through the understanding in mental affairs, and by spontaneous personal choice in devotional affairs.

Dismissing then the details, we come back to the question, how to excite the maximum of interest in religious matters among the young. Two ideas occur. The first is that interest in religion is only a part of interest in things in general. What our education ought to aim at is to cultivate the habit of finding interest in serious subjects no matter what they be. Not of course a mere *passive interest*; it is easy to excite that in any one. You only have to begin an interesting lecture or piece of reading in the schoolroom, and the boys will listen with gaping mouths. What is wanted is to cultivate an *active interest*—a sense of enjoyment in working at

a subject, in acquiring knowledge by reading about it ; a pleasure in the process of search, and a sense of benefit in having acquired results. Finally, a recognition of the maxim that "knowledge is power"—a maxim deeply impressed on the present writer while a small boy at school by the place it held emblazoned on the diploma he triumphantly carried home at the end of a term.

But to give rules how to succeed in arousing this active interest is useless. It is often a matter of atmosphere—one might say of contagion. The teacher of mediocre talent, struggling a few lessons ahead of his class—getting up his subject piecemeal for the day, and fumbling in the class-room when unexpected points turn up—will not create this interest. The teacher who is himself deeply imbued with this interest—who is master of his subject through and through, and who rises to enthusiasm about it — will create an atmosphere of interest around him which will enter the souls of his pupils and make them incipient copies of himself. There are no rules for that. Let the teacher be what he wants the pupils to be ; the rest will follow. Frequent inquiries among men about their school experiences have brought out this fact over and over again. Clearness and method in the class went for something ; but it was always the personality of so-and-so which left the lasting mark on the mind of the pupil at the time, and afterwards on his life. It is one of the causes of the failure of education that a demand for thousands of teachers has flooded the profession with candidates wanting in the personal touch above described ; whose capacity for teaching is measured by their success in passing a book-work examination, and not by their power of making their subject live and speak to the minds of their class. No wonder if the school course resolves itself into an irksome grind, and the boy leaves college with no more

taste for culture or study in after life than an organ-blower has for Bach's fugues.

So we must give up that subject as hopeless, and leave it to the struggle between teaching-incapacity and inspector's requirements competing for the ruin of the schoolboy. Let us turn to the practical question of making religion interesting—of exciting an *active* interest in the schoolboy with regard to religious subjects.

Three points suggest themselves :—(1) The range of matter in which interest must be excited ; (2) the class work in that matter ; (3) other accessory means.

I. THE MATTER.

As regards the matter, more than one layman has suggested to us the idea of introducing in an elementary manner the controversial difficulties to which a boy is liable to be exposed as soon as he leaves school. On the whole we do not agree with this proposal. Controversy is a necessity in the world ; but the controversial spirit is not the ideal we wish to cultivate. To inform the mind of the truth, with at the most an allusion to the errors current against that truth, is the most we should advocate.

Again, we do not believe much in apologetic argumentation in support of religious truth. We should as soon think of flying as of putting any schoolboy through the arguments for the existence of God or the proofs of the Resurrection. The boy's belief in these truths is stronger than any of the arguments would seem to him at his age. Besides, he is never likely to grasp the force of the arguments well enough to do them justice in arguing with others ; and in fact he might easily be worsted in discussion by a man cleverer than himself. No ; controversy and argumentation we should entirely taboo in the school course from beginning to end.

We should confine our effort to a triple series of facts—facts of dogma, facts of Scripture, and facts of Church history. Once provide the fundamentals in these three departments, and breed an interest in them; and then the boy will carry on his progress in after life as occasions require. As regards the errors to be corrected, they could be mentioned incidentally. Thus: “Pope Honorius certainly wrote a letter which was taken by some to encourage or even support such and such an erroneous doctrine. But on examination it seems clear that, &c., and even were it not so, the letter was a private one, and certainly not an *ex-cathedra* definition. Every Catholic knows that the infallibility of the Pope applies only to, &c. Hence in any case the Infallibility is not touched or compromised, &c.” Or, again: “At this period the disturbed state of Europe was such that ambitious men of unspiritual character plotted to attain the papal throne, and some of the worldly men who actually succeeded in obtaining it were unfit for that noble place both in point of knowledge and in point of moral conduct. This only shows the possibility of abuses among the members of the Church, but does not compromise the Church itself as a divine institution. Rather, the divinity of the Church is the more clearly manifested, in that it could survive such evil times and recover from their injurious effects.” These instances are suggested on the spur of the moment, to show how the mind of the pupil could be made aware of objections in the act of furnishing him with the facts which meet them and without introducing the controversial spirit into his mind. After a course like this, the broaching of such objection would find him prepared. They would not come upon him with a sudden shock, and there would be nothing of the fool’s paradise about the matter.

II. THE MEANS IN CLASS.

Next as to the means to be used in class. We suggest the following points, to be adopted as far as the inspectorial spectre can be laid and the incubus of Government examinations allows of their adoption.

(1) *Catechism*. In the lower classes the text of the Catechism learnt, with understanding of the words. In the upper classes a course of interesting instructions on the lines of the Catechism—not explanation of Catechism, but lectures on the main truths, in which the Catechism is referred to as a sort of illustration and confirmation of the lecture. These lectures should be reproduced by questionings and in the form of essays. The metaphysical subtleties of theology not to be introduced, *e.g.*, matter and form; but concrete and interesting presentation of the case, *e.g.*, lectures on the liturgy of the Mass; the origin of certain devotions; the meaning of vespers and compline; popular presentations of the doctrine of grace and the supernatural order; some simple and yet sublime treatment of the wonderful attributes of God, &c. Such lectures to be perfect would require special qualifications; but this only means that importance must be attributed to the course in the upper classes. Clearness and concise picturesqueness would enable much to be done in half an hour per week. The course should not be rhetorical or approach to the character of a sermon.

(2) *Scripture*. The Bible history in the earlier classes. The children should be early familiarized with the Bible itself *as a book*; but the chief attention should be devoted to the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. In the upper classes, these parts at least should be read in their text with explanation and parallel passages, the recent Scripture Manuals being used. Teachers who have prepared pupils for the Oxford

Locals tell us that this lesson is one of the most interesting and instructive they have to teach.

(3) *Church History.* We want a set of Church History readers like the series called "Royal Historical Readers" so well known in educational circles. They are charmingly clear and picturesque; and the boys would enjoy them and be instructed at the same time. If Scripture history is done in the lower classes, the Church history should be carried on after it in the higher classes. The history should be treated in broad outlines—lists of heresies giving place to general summaries touching the essence of the dispute, and referring to the question of the Catechism to show the true definition and the contrary error. This would react and throw interest afresh into the Catechism lesson, and give it a historical setting. The main points in Church history to be enlarged on would be: the progress of the Church in its pagan surroundings, the opposition overcome, the attitude of the Christian emperors towards the Church; the chaos of the northern invasion, the gradual taming of the barbarian by the Church, the settling of Europe; the social and civil foundation-work laid in the dark ages, carried on in the Middle Ages, and perfected in modern times; the eve of the Reformation; its causes, its progress, and its effects, and so on; missionary progress in each age, and the condition of the Church of to-day—special stress being laid on the last point. All this would be done through the medium of a first-class Reader. Thus the state of each country in relation to the Church would be made clear in its antecedents, and Catholics would be able to take an intelligent interest in their own affairs, and feel proud of a Church with such a history and such a power of survival and recuperation.

III. ACCESSORY MEANS.

Thirdly as to accessory means outside the school-room :—

(1) The institution of a library of really well-selected Catholic books on subjects of interest, and arrangements which bring the boys to use the books. There should be times called *Reading Hours*, or something of that sort, during which such books would be given out. Personal direction, recommendation of certain books as interesting, &c. Stories such as *Callista*, *Fabiola*, and other historical fiction should be included; but the mere story should be kept back and reserved for free reading outside this time. The books should be frequently referred to in the class-studies on Church history, &c.

(2) Periodical essays, in which the theme is to give an account of the book read during this reading hour; and prizes assigned to those who showed a power of accurate and discriminating synopsis.

(3) Occasional lectures with lantern slides by able lecturers on topics of interest in Catholic History, *e.g.*, while the Passion is being studied in the Gospels or Bible history, a lecture on Jerusalem at the time of the Passion; while the Acts of the Apostles are being treated, lectures on the Travels of St. Paul; while the early centuries are on the *tapis*, a Visit to the Catacombs with lantern views. The mediæval cathedrals and abbeys would illustrate the Church in England. In fact, the lantern in connection with school studies is a gigantic educational engine mostly lying idle.

We do not intend to develop the subject at length; but these suggestions will indicate the line. Throughout two things would have to be borne in mind. First, that the aim is not merely to entertain the school with fireworks in which the pupils may be passively interested,

but to awaken by judicious methods the active interest of the pupils; which will lead them to read and be interested in Catholic subjects ever after, and build up in them a strong edifice of Catholic knowledge, which will in turn breed appreciation, loyalty, and service. Secondly, the business must in consequence be made attractive and removed as far as possible from the nature of a task. Thirdly, the enthusiasm of the pupils must be caught through an atmosphere in the school, and this atmosphere can exist only where the staff are themselves well informed and interested and capable of giving a swing to the movement. Alas! how is all this possible in the present scramble of Government time-tables and examinations and cram? When the teachers are at their wits' end to struggle through secular work. It all comes back to the calamity of modern education, which, just because it is responsible for the evil, is also the insuperable impediment to the application of the remedy.

So in the end it comes to this. The foregoing chapter has suggested an idea which it may be in the power of some to carry out in their dealing with the young. It may give an incentive to the oftentimes jaded and overworked teacher to throw the greatest possible amount of interest into the religious lesson, and to stir up some enterprise in the way of opening the minds of their pupils to the treasures of interest contained in the Catholic religion. It may have suggested to adults a way of freshening up their own minds, and the idea of giving their religion a chance of being invigorated by an increase of knowledge concerning it. If we have done this, it is enough.

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